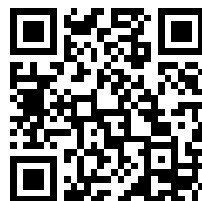

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google[™] books

<https://books.google.com>



NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08166703 6

*DA
CICE

ONCE A WEEK

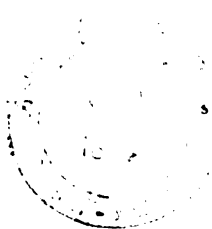
NEW SERIES

VOLUME XII.

JULY TO DECEMBER, 1873.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICES,
19, TAVISTOCK STREET, W.C.

n.
10504.



LONDON:
SWEETING AND CO., PRINTERS,
85, GRAY'S INN ROAD, HOLBORN.

PROY WDB
CLERK
YRAJOL

CONTENTS.

Vol. XII. begins with the number for July 5th, 1873.

	PAGE		PAGE
"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN." 1, 23, 45, 67, 89, 111, 133, 155, 177, 199, 221, 243, 265, 287, 309, 331, 353, 375, 397, 419, 441, 463, 485, 507, 529, 551.		NEPTUNE'S GARDENS	71
DR. MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER. 13, 39, 57, 76, 104, 122, 147, 171, 192, 214, 233, 257, 273, 303, 326, 347, 368, 388, 410, 436, 457, 478.		RAIL, ROAD, AND RIVER IN BENGAL	81
SIL DONNAGHAN THE PIPER. 100, 120, 142, 165, 187.		THE "SUPER'S" STORY	85
HIS AT LAST. 319, 342, 361, 383, 405, 428, 448, 471, 495, 513, 535, 559.		THE NEW USE FOR SAND	93
THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—AMONGST SHELLS	5	A NIGHT AT CASTLE KEVIN	95
THE DEMON SNUFFERS	9	AFTER HURLINGHAM	109
THE "PITCH-IN"	12	A PIECE OF SPONGE	116
THE CAPTAIN'S DAWG	18	THE CARTRIDGE PAPERS.—TO INDIA	117
TABLE TALK. 22, 44, 65, 88, 109, 131, 154, 176, 198, 220, 241, 264, 286, 308, 330, 352, 373, 396, 417, 439, 462, 484, 506, 528, 550, 568.		THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—A CLEARING-UP	127
THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—AT A VEGE- TABLE JEWEL MART	28	GOLDEN LIL	130
A CURIOUS CASE	31	ON ESCORT	138
THE CARTRIDGE PAPERS.—LIFE IN A DRA- GOON REGIMENT	35	AN INCIDENT OF THE COMMUNE	144
"THE BIG FALLS"	50	ME AND MY DOGS.—THE DOG I WOULD NOT HAVE	152
HOW MY GRANDMOTHER LOST A DAY	55	SOUND WITHOUT SENSE	154
THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—INSPECTING STABLES	61	IN FANTI LAND. 160, 204, 248, 314.	
SMUT'S DEATH	64	AMONGST ROGUES AND VAGABONDS	168
		ME AND MY DOGS.—GYPSEY GYP.	182
		THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—A DWELLER IN TENTS	189
		WINE FROM AN OLD BIN	207
		THE MAN ON THE CLIFF	210
		VERSICLES	219
		A POET, BEDAD!	226
		A LANCASHIRE CHEAP TRIP	229
		UNCLE BUNCOMBE'S CHEESE	239
		ME AND MY DOGS.—GRUB	251

	PAGE		PAGE
THE CARTRIDGE PAPERS.—IN BARRACKS	254	THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—IN TERRA DEL	
HOW TO FURNISH	269	FUEGO, SURREY	414
MY LITTLE DITTY	271	NEW NEWS OF THE OIL	424, 446
THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—PLAYING A GAME		THE DRY DIGGINGS	430
AT CARDS	279	SWEET SENSIBILITY	454
VERY SEEDY	281	A CURIOUS TRIAL	469
CHINESE BEGGARS	283	MY BULL HUNT	474
THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—AT A BULB		INDIAN POLICE	475
SALE	294	THE CARTRIDGE PAPERS.—A SOLDIER'S	
ME AND MY DOGS.—FAN	296	DAY IN HINDOSTAN	481
A CENTURY AGO	299	THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—UNBOUND AND	
THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE CHINESE	301	BOUND	491
THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—WITH A DIRTY		THE WISDOM OF OUR ANCESTORS.—	
BOOT	323	GIANTS	500
THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—IN THE SEWERS	335	HOW I WAS SOLD	502, 520
A NEW GAME	339	THE CIRCLE OF FIRE	516
MORE WINE FROM AN OLD BIN	359	AN IRISH COURT-HOUSE	526
LOOKING AHEAD	366	WITH PLIMSOLL ON BOARD THE "GREAT	
THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—TUNEFUL		WESTERN"	537
NUMBERS	380	JUST HIS DUTY	540
THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES	394	AN OCEAN PALACE	545
CRACKING JOKES	402	THE CASUAL OBSERVER.—IN VINO VERITAS	563
VRAICKING	408	THE WISDOM OF OUR ANCESTORS.—THE	
		TARANTULA	566

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 288.

July 5, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER I.

FIRST ENCOUNTERS.



GATHERING crowd in the gay city of Paris; idlers chattering and taking their places along the edge of the pavement—some knowing why they waited, others profoundly ignorant of all save that there was something to be seen. The

fashionable loungeur, the *bonne* with her charge, the workman in his blouse, soldiers, sergeants de ville, and the usual sprinkling of gamins, all were there ready to wait an hour for something less attractive than a royal face.

"He can't be long now, *mon cher*," said one of a group of well-dressed men. "You are so impatient to get back to those wheels and spindles!"

"Impatient—*ma foi!* not I," said the one addressed—an eager, little, keen-eyed man of eight and twenty, rather demonstrative of action, as, turning to a lady and gentleman on his left, he drew back with the natural politeness of his nation. "If monsieur will deign," he continued, raising his hat, "madame will be able to see better from where I stand."

The gentleman gave a half-haughty bow in reply; but the lady, with a smile, availed herself of the offered position; a few words in bad French were uttered; and then the movement and excitement in the crowd betokened the approach of the expected cortège.

The roll of wheels, the jingle of cavalry accoutrements, and a scattered volley of shouts, could now be heard. The crowd pressed forward; the sergeants de ville scowled and signed them to back. The lady—evidently English—drew a frown from her companion by turning excitedly to the little Frenchman, her handsome face full of vivacity as she asked him some question as to the meaning of the procession, a question replied to with equal empressment.

"It is the King, Richard, love," she exclaimed the next instant, as she turned to impart her information.

"We are amongst strangers here, *Adelaide*," was the whispered reply, accompanied by a gloomy look, which made the lady slightly knit her brow and give her head an impatient toss.

"I don't see that we need always carry our insular coldness about with us," she muttered, half contemptuously.

"Messieurs, there is a lady—an English lady—here. I beg you will not press so."

The words were those of the eager little Frenchman, and drawn from him by the movements of a knot of men behind, who crowded upon them somewhat rudely, and though wearing the *ouvriers'* garb, their aspects did not seem to accord with their dress. So rough, indeed, were their movements, that but for the little Frenchman's outstretched arms the lady would have been forced off the trottoir.

"Thanks—much obliged," exclaimed the lady, and her aide was rewarded with a frank, pleasant smile.

"I am also obliged," said the gentleman, turning half round. "And now," addressing his companion, "come, let us get away from here."

"Only a moment longer," was the reply.

There was not time to say more, for now came the clattering of horses' hoofs; the rolling of carriage wheels; a sudden motion at the lady's side; a deafening explosion as

of thunder; and then shrieks, the splintering of glass, cries for help, loud orders, and the panic-stricken crowd rushing here and there, maddened with fear, many to be trampled to death by the plunging horses of the cavalry escort, or crushed beneath the wheels;—then the hurried rush of feet, and those of the fleeing crowd who turned, gazed back upon the bodies of some thirty men, women, and children, some motionless, some writhing in the dust.

For the deadly missile—the cowardly arm of a desperate band of plotters against the State—had done its work swiftly and surely, though utterly failing in its task as far as the regal carriage had been concerned. Twelve poor creatures had been hurried into eternity, while many more had been frightfully injured; the road was torn up; shop windows on either side were beaten in.

But the soldiery had not been idle; and seeing the direction from which the bomb had been thrown, one of the cluster of workmen—a youth—had been seized, and a sergeant de ville now had his hand on the shoulder of the little Frenchman, who was supporting the fainting form of the English lady.

"No, no—absurd!" he exclaimed. "It was not I. Leave me to assist this lady."

The officer drew back, having evidently laid hands upon the nearest to him, and joined his companions, who were ready to arrest everybody in the returning crowd.

"Ciel! madame is not hurt?" exclaimed the little Frenchman as the lady unclosed her eyes.

"No, no—only startled. But where is my husband?"

An opening in the crowd answered her question; and, breaking from her supporter, she darted from the place to which she had been borne by the flying people, back to the torn-up pavement, and, with a wild shriek, threw herself upon a prostrate figure.

"Here—quick! Help, here!—two or three!" exclaimed the little Frenchman. "My house is close at hand—bear the English gentleman there. Officer, my name is Rivière, numero 20, Rue d'Auvergne. Let us pass."

The officers gave way, and the insensible Englishman was borne to the appartement of the Frenchman—a well-appointed second floor of a large house—where they were en-

countered at the door by a young and well-featured lady, who gazed with frightened air from face to face.

"It is nothing, Marie—do not be alarmed. An English gentleman—an accident. There—there—the couch—good. You—you—fetch instantly a surgeon."

The surgical assistance was soon rendered, and the extent of the injuries shown to be a violent contusion of the head, sufficient to have produced insensibility, but that was all.

"Might he be removed to his hotel?" the lady asked anxiously.

"Oh, yes," said the surgeon, "after a few hours."

If madame would favour him with a card, he would visit the patient again in the evening.

The lady hastily drew a card from a mother-of-pearl case, wrote upon it an address in pencil, and handed it to the surgeon.

Bon. "Sir Richard and Lady Lawler, Hôtel Beaufort." Good. He would pass there in the evening, and meanwhile miladi need be under no anxiety—Sir Richard would soon be well.

"But these Anglais, they have thick skulls!" said the surgeon, with a shrug, as he was shown out by Rivière. "That splinter of bombshell, mon ami, would have crushed through our heads like as if they had been eggshell. Pouf! voyez vous?"

Rivière nodded, and then returned to his wife.

"Will they stay here, Louis?" she whispered, as she fondly laid a little white hand on his shoulder, gazing with a troubled look in his face.

"Stay? Ma foi! no. I could not do less. It was frightful. And the poor people are strange."

The ringing of a bell was followed by the entrance of a servant.

"The English gentleman and lady wish to see monsieur."

"Bon," said Rivière, turning towards the door. "But stay, little one—Marie, you need not come."

"Yes, yes—do not stop me," she whispered earnestly, as she clung to his hand. "I am weak and foolish, and you will laugh, Louis—but I have only you; and—and—this tall English lady, with her bright, handsome face—she—she looked at you, Louis."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Rivière, catching her in his arms. "Qu'il est beau, this husband of yours. He is a killer of dames with one glance! Silly bird! what are you thinking about? I had not seen them for many minutes. And there is only one Marie in this world."

The next instant husband and wife were clasped in an effusive embrace, and then they parted—the former holding up a threatening finger at the loving face turned towards him.

Rivière entered the next room to find Sir Richard Lawler sitting up, with Lady Lawler, pale but smiling, standing with one hand resting upon his shoulder.

"Monsieur Rivière," exclaimed the injured man frankly, as he held out his hand, "I am greatly indebted to you, both for my own and my wife's sake. We are very strange and ignorant, and I hardly know how we should have fared but for your kindness."

"But it is nothing," said Rivière, lightly; "and I—we are only too glad. Monsieur would have done as much for me—and for Marie. Let me introduce her."

Rivière hurried to the door, and returned in a few minutes with his wife, when the introductions were gone through; but not without an exhibition of restraint on either side when the ladies touched hands.

"But monsieur will not think of leaving yet for some hours?"

Madame Rivière gazed full in Lady Lawler's face, but the effort was vain, and a pang shot through her little heart as she saw the Englishwoman's bright, bold eyes fixed upon her husband.

"We are greatly obliged," said Lady Lawler, eagerly; "but my husband feels anxious to be back at the hotel, and already we have given you too much trouble."

"But it is no trouble," said Rivière, gravely. "I hold it to have been a duty."

"It is very kind," exclaimed Lady Lawler, hurriedly; "but if you would have a voiture ordered for us, we should be very grateful. And, Richard," she said, turning to her husband, "you had something to say to Monsieur Rivière?"

"Yes, yes—of course," said Sir Richard. "We are very grateful; and my wife—we hope that you will come and dine with us to-morrow. I shall be all right then. Say you will come."

"I shall be charmed," said Rivière.

"And Madame Rivière, of course," said Lady Lawler, crossing to the pale little wife, and with womanly grace taking her hand. "We wish for an opportunity of thanking your gallant husband for his kindness. You will come?"

Poor Marie Rivière trembled, and a chill seemed to run through her as she gazed in a half-frightened way at the tall, self-possessed beauty at her side. She *was* afraid of her; she owned to herself; and a vague sense of uneasiness oppressed her as she endeavoured to reply cheerfully to the words of gratitude.

But the uneasiness remained; and when, an hour or two afterwards, Lady Lawler bade her farewell, kissing her upon the cheek, and Rivière had gone down with his guests to the fiacre, Marie sank into a chair, anxious and troubled, and sought for relief in tears.

CHAPTER II.

A THUNDERCLAP.

PARIS was in a state of the wildest excitement, and in club and in street men met to discuss the dire effects of the conspiracy, and the almost miraculous escape of the King. Questions innumerable were asked regarding what was to come next, the lovers of law and order trembling as past revolutionary efforts were recalled; but the clouds on the political horizon seemed to trouble Louis Rivière but little, as he sat the next day in the little room he called his atelier, busy fitting together some piece of mechanism whose wheels, pinions, and springs he had been for weeks past constructing, ever and anon throwing down file or pointed drill to take up a violin, screw up a string, and then dash off, in an eccentric fashion, some wild refrain or difficult variation. Then, once more the mechanism would be seized, and with a watchmaker's glass in his eye, he toiled on, till he became aware that his wife was standing, pale and anxious, by his chair.

"Well, p'tite," he exclaimed, turning half round, so as to touch her hand with his lips, "how goes it with you?"

Marie's lip quivered as he uttered those words, but she remained silent; till, turning round in surprise, Rivière saw that the tears were stealing down her cheeks, and the next moment she was on her knees, weeping bitterly.

"Is this fair, Marie?" he exclaimed,

sternly. "I thought, after what was said this morning, you would have behaved more sensibly. It is silly—childish in the extreme. I say a few words to an English lady, in common politeness, and then fate ordains that I shall bring her to our home to render a little assistance, when, in a foolish fit, you take a violent dislike to her. I will not call it jealousy: it would be insulting both her and your husband."

"No, no, Louis—do not be angry. It is not that; but I cannot help it. It is as you say. Fate ordained that she should come here; and I fear her, and tremble for what fate may have in the future. But you will not go there to-night?"

"But I certainly shall," he exclaimed, impetuously. "It would be insulting their hospitality were I to stay away; and I should feel that I was wanting in firmness and self-respect were I to listen to your foolish scruples."

"But, Louis!" she exclaimed, excitedly.

"There, there, little one," he said, tenderly—"taisez vous, and let us have no more of it. Now, if you were jealous of my machine, or of my old Straduarus here, I should not be surprised," he cried, lightly. "But jealousy!—pooh, nonsense! I look like a gay lad, do I not?"

He made a grimace as he drew the agitated woman close to him, and then glanced with a depreciatory look down upon himself before meeting her eyes, which seemed to tell most plainly that in their sight he had not his equal in the whole world.

"Do not laugh about it, Louis," she said, excitedly. "I feel nervous and troubled. Tell me that you will not go."

"No," he said, firmly, "I shall do no such thing. I shall go. Look here, Marie. We have been married six months; and never, in thought or deed, have I given you cause for discomfort. What you feel in this case is absurd."

"But, Louis," she said, imploringly, "I have another reason. I cannot go; and Monsieur Lemaire is sure—"

"Let us change the subject, my child," he said, taking up a wheel, and once more fitting his glass into his eye. "Ah, Lemaire—you there?" he said, cheerfully, as a tall, gentlemanly young fellow entered, the one who had spoken to him banteringly on the previous day. "Well, and how go the political matters—how the situation?"

"Really," said the new-comer, "I know

very little. But how is Madame Rivière?" he said, approaching her with great deference, to receive only a cold and distant inclination of the head in reply—an inclination that he received with a half-smile as he turned back to Rivière's bench. "When is the Eureka to be finished?"

He took up a wheel to balance on one white finger.

"Finished!" echoed Rivière, "never, I expect. Do you know, Lemaire, that situated as I am, with no occupation, the worst thing that could happen to me would be to get that piece of work finished. What should I do then?"

"Music—madame votre femme," said Lemaire, with a hardly perceptible sneer. "Rivière is no courtier," he continued, turning towards Madame Rivière.

But she only uttered some inaudible reply, and left the room, followed by Lemaire's eyes, in a strange, furtive fashion—a glance that she encountered for a moment before closing the door.

"Any more arrests made?" queried Rivière, filing away at a wheel.

"Yes, several, I suppose; and they do say that there will be a grand sweep made to-night, as several have been denounced."

"Poor wretches!" said Rivière, in sympathising tones. "But ring that bell, and we'll have a cigar and a bottle of Beaume, for I shall be out this evening."

"Out!" said Lemaire, eagerly.

"Yes—to dinner with my new friend, the English milord, and his charming lady."

"Let me see—where did you say they were staying?"

"I don't remember that I said they were staying anywhere; but, all the same, they are at the Hôtel Beaufort."

"Madame goes, of course?"

"Well, yes, if I can persuade her into it," said Rivière. "Perhaps not."

"I don't think I would press her," said Lemaire. "She seems nervous and unwell: I have noticed it these two or three days past. And yesterday's affair did her no good. Have you not seen it?"

"I am ashamed to say that I have not," said Rivière. "But then, we are not all students of medicine, Lemaire. By the way, you ought to have attended the Englishman. Where were you?"

"Oh, I went on to the palace to see how matters went. You had Conté, I suppose? Well, he's clever."

The wine and cigars were brought in, and Lemaire—a young medical practitioner—sat for some time with his friend; and as at last there seemed no probability of Madame Rivière returning, and in answer to a message sent she excused herself on the plea of a headache, Lemaire rose and left the place, promising to call the following day.

For quite a couple of hours Rivière remained busily engaged at his work bench, till a glance at his watch awakening him to the fact that he had but little time to spare, he hurried out, hoping to find Madame Rivière dressing for the dinner to which they were invited. But again she pleaded a headache; and at last, with some little annoyance, Rivière dressed and started alone for Sir Richard Lawler's hotel, to find the young baronet very little the worse for his accident, while to the excitable young Frenchman Lady Lawler seemed the most charming woman he had yet seen, the result being that the homage he rendered was sufficient to draw an impatient, angry look on several occasions from her husband.

But these looks were lost upon Rivière, who chatted merrily on, played with their child—a bright, sunny-faced boy of a year old—condoled with Sir Richard because he was forbidden wine, with Lady Lawler that there were no fêtes, no reviews, no opera, nothing to make Paris sufferable to so charming a visitor—words which made the husband's brow knit, till the lady, seeing the effect, laughed half contemptuously, and then, with a mischievous glance, laid herself out to receive more and more of the foreign incense so liberally bestowed.

To Rivière the dinner was perfectly charming, and he appeared to be thoroughly enjoying the society of his new friends; but the waiters had no sooner quitted the room than Sir Richard interrupted an extremely complimentary remark by exclaiming—

"Hang it all, Adelaide, I cannot stand this!"

And he rose, and began to stride impatiently up and down the room.

"But I am thoughtless," exclaimed Rivière, rising. "I talk on, and do not think of your weakness. Madame—I beg pardon, miladi—leaves us now. Let us draw up to the window, and have our coffee. Allow me."

He hurried to the door, and opened it for Lady Lawler, bowing in acknowledgment of a smile which sent the blood flush-

ing to her husband's forehead as she swept out of the room. But as Rivière returned to the window, it was with a frank, pleasant look, his clear gray eyes meeting those of his host in a bold, straightforward fashion that was not without its effect upon the baronet.

"But miladi is charming. You are a happy man, Sir Richard."

"I don't know so much about that," said the baronet, awkwardly. And then, evidently striving to drive away unpleasant thoughts, he continued, "But you have no cause to complain."

"Cause to complain?" said Rivière, inquiringly, for the idiom puzzled him.

"Well, then," said Sir Richard, laughing, "madame is also charming. She should have been here."

"Ma femme—Marie? Yes, is she not?" exclaimed Rivière. "Pauvre enfant! But I love her most dearly. She is weak, though, and unwell, and I ought hardly to have left her; but I was put out—and we French are strange: now we are here, now we are there—we change quickly," he said, gesticulating. "And I am hasty, and she vexed me. But there, with Marie my anger is such that a word blows it away. Pouf! it is gone."

He made as though he blew a morsel of down from his fingers, and again gazed frankly in Sir Richard Lawler's face as the young baronet sat back in his chair, asking himself whether this man was honest, or only a shameless humbug.

The reverie was interrupted by a clanking noise outside the door, a few words were uttered loudly, and Sir Richard Lawler rose angrily as half a dozen gendarmes entered the room, the waiters clustering round the open door.

"What is the meaning of this? What the deuce—how dare you enter without knocking?"

The officer in command raised his eyebrows the slightest shade, and, advancing to the window, said, in cold, formal tones—

"Louis Rivière, you are my prisoner!"

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AMONGST SHELLS.

HELD to the ear! Yes, held to the ear, so as to obtain the faint, far-off whisperings of the sea—the soft, murmurous sighs—the low love-song of the waves; as they lap, and creep, and crawl in amongst

the weed-draped rocks, black crag, gneiss, or granite, and then penetrate to the caves, and send forth this soft, deep roar that we have heard again and again in childhood when holding a shell to the ear.

We hold one to our ear now, as we stand by this seaside stall, with the skin growing parched and brown upon neck and hands, and the sand adhering to our blacking-denuded boots, with which we have been making acquaintance with the waves just where the ebbing tide leaves a silvery line upon the tawny sands.

What are the wild waves saying, then, as we hold this bright, glowing, nacreous shell to our ear?

They say that the old woman is a humbug, who keeps this neatly covered-in stall, heaped and piled with rainbow-tinted shells, displayed for the benefit of Cockney visitors, with the very ostensible make-believe that the treasures they see have been derived from the waves close at hand. Why, it was only just this minute that a couple of sanguine boys, fresh from the East-end of London, stood gaping at the piled-up treasures—the raw and the manufactured article; and then one said to the other—

“Come along, Dick—let’s go and find some.”

Poor boys! We may not meet them again; but the chances are that if we do, some hours hence, it will be laden with a very light burden of some half-dozen treasures of the deep, consisting of one mussel shell, a cockle, a periwinkle, a broken razor, half a limpet, and a fragment of a whelk. The two pearly pieces of water-worn oyster shell, chafed thin with the attrition of the shingle, we will not count.

No, good visitor to the seaside, who gazes upon the bright display on jetty or in bazaar, those shelly treasures are not collected upon our shores, but come from far over the sea; and those two East-end boys ought to have known better, for they must have seen the shops of the wholesale shell dealers in Houndsditch and Ratcliff-highway.

We take up the shells one by one, and hold them to the ear, and there comes the soft, old, mellow roar peculiar to that tortoise-shell-tinted ornament that used to be taken off the mantelpiece—ah, well, we won’t say how many years ago, but it was in those days when young human nature was not content without tasting as well as feeling everything given for a plaything. In this

case nature’s colours were fast, and did not come off upon our lips like the yellow overcoat worn by the Shem of the great Noah’s Ark bought for us at the bazaar of Soho. Well, listening to the echoes in each shell in turn, it seems to tell us its history; and we treat upon them here. These showy, cheap shells, that are chosen for their gaudy colours or great size, form the staple of an extensive trade from the docks to the dealer’s shop in London, radiating thence to our various watering-places, and others of holiday resort.

We need not trouble now about the choice cabinet specimens, for which conchologists will give large sums, but take those kinds that must be familiar, though not in the state in which they arrive by the ton in the holds of ships from Japan, from New Zealand, from China, from Singapore and Zanzibar, from Madagascar and the Thousand Islands, from the South Seas and the West Indies, from Batavia, Penang, Madras, and Sydney. Here they are upon this stall, the most gorgeous shells from the whole world, piled “promiscuous like;” but, as before said, not as they first arrived. For instance, we take up this great shell, known in the trade as a snail, from its similarity of shape to the strawberry poacher of our gardens; but this is big as two babies’ heads, and it is one blaze of satin sheen, apparently varnished with the concentrated essence of rainbow, carefully applied—of course, in a liquid form—with a brush formed of the pencilled rays of the moon. Or we might say that the great shell had brought with it the lustre of the gorgeous sunsets of its tropical home.

But here is the same shell—raw, unmanufactured; for Nature’s beauties are sometimes hidden from sight. Here is this same gorgeous shell, a lump of foul encrustations, coral-like, barnacle-like. Why, the shell in its natural state must have been a refuge for the destitute, and about as devoid of cleanliness as—as—as—well, the dirtiest thing under the sun. And it is the same with nearly all, from ear shells upwards and downwards. The briny concretions have to be cleared away, and sometimes also the outer crust of the shell, as in the snails, before the nacreous or pearly beauties are laid bare, and the shells are polished and fit for sale.

The process of cleansing is most simple, and can easily be explained without going far into chemistry and geology.

As most people are aware, the corals of the tropic seas as well as the shells of their fish are built up slowly of the lime taken up by the animals from the water. Our very chalk hills are but concrete masses of tiny shells—masses of carbonate of lime, upon which, if a drop of acid falls, a chemical change takes place, and bubbles of carbonic acid gas arise. The ginger beer and soda water maker knows this; and, after breaking up his lumps of chalk, pours on them sulphuric acid or vitriol, storing in a holder the gas which arises, for charging his so-called mineral waters.

The process, then, with the fresh arrivals is simple. The rough shells—of a dull, ash-gray—are tumbled into a great vessel, and upon them is poured acid, strong or dilute, to eat away the lime to a sufficient depth, and leave them clean and bright and pearly.

Here is one, a perfect glow of gorgeous colours—such a one as should have formed the sea home of Venus; a heliotis this, from New Zealand, commonly known as the red ear. The white ear, a satiny shell, is from Japan; and, similar in shape, we have the black ear and the banded red. Beauties all, but common enough, and familiar in many a home, with that row of perforations in a curve.

We take up others. Here is one of the murex family, bright in its dyes, and known to dealers as the Queen of the Shells. This is from the Pacific shores of unsettled Central America. The whisper from the shell is that it is a gasteropod—but enough of that. Another whisper is that it belongs to the family from which the ancients obtained that glorious colour known as Tyrian dye. Bright enough, no doubt, and probably obtained from a Mediterranean murex; but, in these days of aniline dyes, of mauves, and magentas, and Solferinos, surely we can hold our own.

This white murex is from Zanzibar, and was probably packed, as it was fished for, by a slave. But here is a great buff beauty—not pearly this, but soft, and ripe, and fruity-looking; well named, too—the melon shell. This one is the “coroneted,” from its elevations; this the “boat-shaped.” From China they, and handled again and again, in collecting and trading, by the relatives of the celebrated Ah-sin himself.

“In his sleeves, which were long,
He had twenty-four Jacks.”

Alas! for his smile, that was childlike and bland, it saved him not from the wrath of Bill Nye, when “he went for that heathen Chinese.”

Long, lithe, untrimmed-nailed Chinese fingers collected, too, these familiar spider shells, and the scorpions with their claw-like appendages, and delicate, rosy, dawn-blushing interiors—such as must have made their inmates very proud of their dwellings when they were at home.

More Chinamen. Silver tips, gold mouths, quite metallic in appearance: the silver nautilus, the virgin cone, the magpie, and the mitre. Strange names these, and hard to describe; but, when the eye falls upon the shell itself, striking the gazer as being, in many cases, singularly appropriate.

Another to examine. The harp shell this, from Madagascar; and close by, specimens of the great, flat, blackish oyster shells, so thick in nacre that they are used by the ton in button making. The snails, though, supply the pearl for the worker—the snails and the South Sea Island trochus. The worker's saw can take great flat cuttings from these; and the inlayer, the knife handle maker, all the workers in mother-of-pearl, get here their supply.

A roarer this, when held to the ear. It is fit that he should give forth a perfect bellow, for his name—no inapt one—is the bull-mouth. The helmet, too;—and now we are amongst the conchs—the trumpets of the mermen and sea gods, from which, according to mythology, they blew forth gurgling, watery, wishy-washy tunes as they clustered round the sea-horsed chariot of trident-bearing Neptune. The Queen conch this, and this the pink conch. You know them both, and have seen them scores of times used to ornament the fireless grate; but, from the various tints of the layers of which they are formed, they have long been the favourite material from which our most beautiful cameos are cut. For instance, here we have a pure white layer of shell upon one of a delicate salmon buff, and the worker cuts his head or figure in the white, which stands out in relief upon the buff-hued ground.

We have no specimen here, but the whispering of the shell brings up the picture of the great bivalve so often used for a holy water fount or a fountain—the great, fluted, wavy, triangular-shaped fellow, in his native state, weighing a hundred pounds or

so, and imitated so often by our designers of drinking fountains in the streets.

That very word bivalve, too, brings up oysters, and oysters a lament upon their price; and oysters bring up tubs, and tubs the word natives, and natives Christmas presents, and Christmas presents Charles Dickens and Bob Sawyer with the tub between his knees; and from that, again, the mind roams over American oysters, and spat, and, of course, Frank Buckland. Back to American oysters, too, and clams, and Thackeray and the huge one he swallowed, declaring it to be big as a baby's head; and from that, back we are at the old woman's stall here by the sea.

Well, she cannot help it if people believe the shells to be native products of the place, and that smile of hers is very suave as she hands us a shell to whose murmur we cannot listen, for it is a great cardium or cockle, shaped like our own, but stuffed with bran and filled in with red velvet, to make a pincushion. But here are others empty, and with even tiny fragments of the original animal adhering by the curious hinge. Beautifully tinted, too, are many of these; not gorgeous, pearly, iridescent markings, but soft sky and cloud drawings of colour—rose petals in hard lime, without a single violent contrast of colour.

Hard cash! Yes, hard cash. But even the rest of the shells represent so much hard cash, since they have formed objects of desire, and attracted the attention of the commercial mind. But these shells, more especially, bring forth the term "hard cash," since they are cowries—the old money currency of the noble African. They know their value, too, in Asia. A pleasant place Bengal must be for the man who is hard up; for, think—he could collect cowries on the coast, or get a "put over" to the Maldives, either in a boat or, say, a catamaran, and then collect and bag the shells. His bag need, certainly, be big; for three thousand two hundred cowries go to a rupee—therefore it would take about thirty-six to be of the value of a farthing. The West Coast of Africa, though, is the place for this sterling coin; and tons upon tons are brought from the east to our docks, for our vessels to turn the imports into exports, and trade with them amongst the fever-haunted mangroves about the Guinea coast and farther south.

These are the money cowries—these

little yellowish-white fellows, less than an inch in length. Surely they are the same as the boxful we used for counters, long ago, when playing at vingt-un, and knew as "blackamoor's teeth." But these, again, are cowries, these porcelain shells, and these with the brown tortoise-shell markings, polished so often, and sold about the streets, stuck upon a little slab of marble.

It is not until one begins to examine—or, to keep up our simile, to apply the shells to the ear and listen—that one becomes aware of the infinity of species and varieties. Why, even here, the names are legion. There are scores that we cannot even name. But we must have a word for these Singapore volutes, and another for these great yellow trumpet shells. The mussels, too, are highly ornamental—the purple, the jetty black; and these latter, pure and free from stain, white as ivory—nay, more white. Chinese these, and elegant enough to have been the suggesters of that most charming of our household necessities, the porcelain named after the country of its origin, China. Surely, some time or other, back in the celestial dark ages, when Fo was a young man, or when Confucius was in words of one syllable, an ingenious, bland, smiling Flowery Lander, who practised pottery for his living, must have seen the white mussel, and taken it for a model for his material. We don't believe that he was successful; but perhaps he improved the clay, and laid the foundation dab for the translucent fictile works that we can now equal at home, if not surpass.

But the shells have ceased to whisper, and that was the voice of the old woman which spoke. We called her a humbug at the beginning of this diffuse peroration on shells; but we withdraw the term, and substitute the word "trader," as being quite as explicit, without being offensive. She has just said something about the price of one of her shells; and it is evident that she is afraid we mean to quit her stall, after so long a stay, without making a purchase; and it would be hard upon the poor, old, patient soul, who has smiled for the whole time that we have been handling her wares, and, besides, does she not support her grandchildren?—orphans of a fisher son who went to sea; and—

What shall we have, then? Why, this paper nautilus—filmy, and pure, and fluted, and convoluted, and beautiful. No more

exquisite ornament could embellish a drawing-room. We bear then away one little argonaut, carefully, lest it should be crushed. Here it is, then, at our lodgings; and we begin to think of its natural history, position, and that it is as near a relative of the octopus as possible; that it belongs to a genus of cephalopodous mollusca; and that—but stay, this sort of thing is harder than shell, so we will be content with such information as came in the whisperings of such shells as were held to the ear.

THE DEMON SNUFFERS.

I'M not at all given to parading my troubles—nothing of the kind. I may be getting old, in fact I am; and I may have had disappointments such as have left me slightly irritable and peevish; but I ask, as a man, who wouldn't be troubled in his nerves if he had suffered from snuffers?

Snuffers? Yes, snuffers—a pair of cheap, black, iron snuffers, that screech when they are opened and creak when they are shut; a pair that will not stay open nor yet keep shut; a pair that gape at you incessantly, and point at you a horrid, sharp iron beak, as a couple of leering eyes turn the finger and thumb holes into a pair of spectacles, and squint and wink at you maliciously. A word in your ear—this in a whisper—those snuffers are haunted! their insignificant iron frame is the habitation of a demon—an imp of darkness; and I've been troubled till I've got snuffers on the brain, and I shall have till I'm snuffed out.

It has been going on now for a couple of years, ever since my landlady sent the snuffers up to me first in my shiny crockery-ware candlestick, where those snuffers glide about like a snake in a tin pail. I remember the first night as well as can be. It was in November—a weird, wet, foggy night, when the river-side streets were wrapped in a yellow blanket of fog—and I was going to bed, when at my first touch of the candlestick those snuffers glided off with an angry snap, and lay, open-mouthed, glaring at me from the floor.

I was somewhat startled, certainly, but far from alarmed; and I seized the fugitives, and replaced them in the candlestick, opened the door, and ascended the stairs.

Mind, I am only recording facts, untinged by the pen of romance! Before I had ascended four steps, those hideous snuffers

darted off, and plunged point downwards on to my left slippered foot, causing me an agonizing pang, and the next moment a bead of starting blood stained my stocking.

I will not declare this, but I believe it to be a fact: as I said something oathish, I am nearly certain that I heard a low, fiendish chuckle; and when I stooped to lift the snuffers, there was a bright spark in the open mouth, and a pungent blue smoke being breathed out to annoy my nostrils.

I was too bold in those days to take much notice of the incident, and I hurried upstairs—not, however, without seeing that there was a foul black patch left upon the holland stair-cloth; and then I hurried into bed, and tried to sleep. But I could not, try as I would. In the darkness I could just make out the candlestick against the blind; and from that point incessantly the demon snuffers gradually approached me, till they sat spectacle-wise astride my nose, and a pair of burning eyes gazed through them right into mine.

Need I say that I arose next morning feverish and unrefreshed to go about my daily duties?

"I'll have no more of it to-night," I said to myself, as I rose early to go to bed, and make up for the past bad night; and I smiled sardonically as I took up the highly glazed candlestick, and tried to shake the black, straddling reptile out upon the sideboard. I say tried; for, to my horror, the great eyeholes leered at me as they hugged round the upright portion of the stick and refused to be dislodged. I shook them again, and one part went round the extinguisher support, which the reptile dislodged, so that the extinguisher rattled upon the sideboard top. But the snuffers were there still. I tried again, and they, or it, dodged round and thrust a head through the handle, where they stuck fast, grinning at me till I set the candlestick down and stared.

"Pooh!—stuff!—ridiculous!" I exclaimed, quite angry at my weak, imaginative folly; and, determined to act like a man, I seized the candlestick with one hand, the snuffers with the other, and after a hard fight, succeeded in wriggling them out of their stronghold, banged them down upon the table cloth, seized them again, snuffed my candle viciously before replacing them on the table, and then marched out of the room, proud of my moral triumph, and rejoicing in having freed myself of the demon.

But as I stood upon the stairs, I could see that my hand was blackened; and the icy, galvanic feeling that assailed my nerves when I first touched the snuffers still tingled right to my elbow.

But I was free of my enemy; and marching with freely playing lungs into my bed-room, I closed and locked the door, set down my empty candlestick, changed my coat and vest for a dressing-gown, and began to brush my hair.

It is my custom to brush my hair with a pair of brushes for ten minutes every night before retiring to rest. I find it strengthening to the brain. Upon this occasion I had brushed hard for five minutes, when there was a loud knock at my bed-room door.

"Can I speak to you a moment, sir?" said the voice of my landlady.

I rose and opened the door, and then started back in disgust, as I was greeted with—

"Please, sir, you forgot your snuffers!"

My snuffers! It was too horrible; but there was more to bear.

"And please, sir, I do hope you'll be more careful. It's a mussy we warn't all burnt to death in our beds, for the snuffers have made a great hole as big as your hand in the table cloth, and scorched the mahogany table; and it was a mussy I went into your room before I went up to bed."

I couldn't speak, for I was drawn irresistibly on to obey, as my landlady held the snuffers' handle towards me, and pointed to the great fungus snuff upon my common candle. I thrust in a finger and thumb, closed the door in desperation—for I could not refuse the snuffers—once more locked myself in, and stalked to the dressing table; and, as I heard my landlady's retreating steps, I snuffed the candle, which started up instantly with a brighter flame as the snuffers' mouth closed upon the incandescent wick.

"I'm slightly nervous," I said to myself, as I essayed to put down my enemies. "I want tone—iron—iodine—tonic bitters—and—curse the thing!" I ejaculated, shaking my hand, and trying to dislodge the snuffers. My efforts were but vain, for the rings clung tightly to my finger and thumb, cut into my flesh, and it was not until I had given them a frantic wrench, which broke the rivet and separated the halves, that I was able to tear out my bruised digits, and stand panting at the broken instrument.

There was relief though, here. I felt as if I had crushed out the reptile's life; and the two pieces—their living identity gone—lay nerveless and devoid of terrors in the candle tray.

I slept excellently that night, and smiled as I dressed beside the broken fragments. I had achieved a victory over self, as well as over an enemy. I enjoyed my breakfast, after raising the white cloth to look at the damage, which I knew would appear as twenty shillings in the weekly bill; but I did not care, though I shuddered slightly as I thought of the snuffers' horrible designs. I dined that day with friends, played a few games afterwards at pool, and then we had oysters.

I was in the best of spirits as I opened the door with my latch-key, and I laughed heartily at what I called my folly of the previous nights; but, as I entered my room, there was the great black hole in the green cloth table cover, and the charred wood beneath, while upon the sideboard—

I groaned as I stood half-transfixed. I could have imagined that I had on divers' leaden-soled boots; for there, maliciously grinning at me, with half-opened mouth, were the demon snuffers, joined together by a new, glistening rivet, which only added to their weird appearance, as the beak cocked itself at me, and the great eyes glared as the black mouth seemed to say—

"You'll never get rid of me!"

Something seemed to draw me, and I went and took the candlestick, my eyes being fixed the while upon the snuffers; and I came in contact with several pieces of furniture as I went into the passage, where I held the candlestick very much on one side as I lit the candle at the little lamp. I hoped that the snuffers would fall out; but they grinned maliciously, and did not stir.

The next moment I was obliged to use them, for the candle began to gutter; when, as nothing followed, I grew bolder, and began to ascend the stairs. In a minute, though, before I was half up the second flight, and though the candlestick was carried perfectly straight—crash! the demon snuffers darted out, and dashed themselves upon the floor.

I did not stay to look, but hurried to my bed-room, closing and locking the door.

"Safe this time!" I thought; for it was late, and I knew that my landlady must have been long in bed. Then I began to think

of how they had hopped out of the candlestick, and I remembered what they had done upon the previous night—how they had tried to set fire to the house. Suppose they should do so now! The cold perspiration trickled down my nose at the very thought. I dared not leave the demon, or twin demons—the horrid Siamese pair.

I would, though—I was safe here. But fire! Suppose they set the house on fire?

Irresistible fate, with an inconceivable attraction, led me back to the door, which I opened, and then I groaned, for there was no help for it. I could smell strongly that animal-burning odour given off by woollen fabrics, and I knew that the carpet must be on fire.

Down I went in the dark—very softly too, lest I should alarm the landlady and the other lodgers; but, though the odour was strong, I went right to the bottom and stood upon the door-mat without finding my enemies.

I stood and thought for a few minutes, and then began slowly to ascend, feeling carefully all over every step as I went up to my bed-room, where I arrived without ever my hand coming in contact with that which I sought.

"I'll go to bed and leave them!" I ejaculated, and I turned upon my heel; but at that moment the pungent burning odour came up stronger than ever, and I was compelled to descend, to find that the demon twins had been lying in ambush half-way down, so that I trod upon them, tripped, in my terror my foot glided over them, and I fell with a crash into the umbrella stand, which I upset with a hideous noise upon the oilcloth—not so loud, though, but that I could hear the little black imps take three or four grasshopper leaps along the passage, ending by sticking the pointed beak into the street door.

Before I could gather myself up, I heard doors opening upstairs, and screaming from the girls below, who slept in the kitchen; and the next minute old Major O'Brien's voice came roaring down—

"An' if ye shtir a shtep, I'll blow out yer brains!"

Of course I had to explain; and I had the horrible knowledge that they gave me the credit of being intoxicated—the Major saying he would not stop in a house where people went prowling about at all hours, ending by himself, at the landlady's request,

examining the door to see if it was latched securely, and then seeing me safely to my room.

"An' if I did me duty, sor, I should lock you in," he said by way of good night. "And now get into bed, sor, and at once; and—here are your snuffers!"

I could fill volumes with the tortures inflicted upon me by those haunted snuffers, for they clung to me, and, in spite of every effort, never left me free. It was in vain that I came home early and shifted them into the Major's candlestick: they only came back. I threw them out of the bed-room window once, and they were found by the maid in the area. I threw them out again, and they were picked up by the policeman, and they made him bring them back. Then I tried it at midday; but an old woman brought them in, and made a row because they went through her parasol, so that I had to pay ten shillings, besides being looked upon by my landlady as a lunatic.

I thrust them into the fire one night, and held them there with the tongs, lest they should leap out; but they would not burn, and my landlady finding them in the ashes, had them jappanned, and they were in their old place next day. I had no better luck when I thrust them—buried them—deep in a scuttle of ashes; they only turned up out of the dusthole when Mary sifted the cinders.

They always came off black on to my hands, when they did not anoint my fingers with soft tallow. If they fell out of the candlestick, it was always on to oilcloth or paint, where they could make a noise jumping about like a grasshopper, till they ended by standing upon the sharp beak, with the spectacle-like holes in the air. If I went up to dress, they would shoot into my collar box, or amongst my clean shirts, smutting them all over. If I tried to kill a wasp with them upon an autumn evening, when the insect crept out of a plum at dessert, the wretches only snipped him in two, as if rejoicing at the inflicted torture. In short, they **have worn me out—those snuffers**; and if it was not from fear, I should take and drop them from the parapet of a bridge.

But, there! it would be in vain; they would be certain to turn up; and they are not mortal, so what can you expect? Let this communication be a secret, for it is written wholly by day, when the snuffers lie in the lower regions.

A bright thought has occurred to me—the Major leaves this morning for Berlin.

* * * *

I have done it—his carpet bag stood in the hall, waiting for the cab. The Major was in the drawing-room paying his bill. The maids were upstairs making the beds. I stole down like a thief into the kitchen. The snuffers were in my dirty candlestick upon the dresser. I seized the grinning, tallow-anointed demons, flew up the stairs, and, as I heard the drawing-room door open, tore the bag a little apart, and thrust them in.

The next minute they were on the roof of a cab, and on their way to Berlin, where they will haunt the Major.

* * * *

A month of uninterrupted joy has passed. On the day of the Major's departure, I seemed to wed pleasure; and this has been the honeymoon. This morning, when I paid my bill, the landlady announced the coming back of the Major to his old apartments. I have been in dread ever since. But this is folly. I will be hopeful: my worst fears may not be confirmed.

* * * *

It's all over—he has brought them back! They grin at me as I write.

THE "PITCH-IN."

HOW did I get this mark on my cheek,
And the long black scar on my brow?
Oh, never mind—it would take a week,
And you can't want to know it now.
You do! Very well, you shall have it then,
All the same—a bit rough in the style;
For you can't 'spect stories from railway men,
Nor poems from sons of the soil.
You know as I drives the Hector, eh?
Express on the North great gauge;
I only drove one of the shorts that day,
And of course was much lower in wage.
We stopped at all stations from London out,
And we stopped at each signal in;
The work made a man thin, no matter how stout,
And it never made stout the man thin.
For you see on that line there were tunnels a score,
And cross-lines, all forming a net;
And points in one tunnel where Jack Braddon swore
We should some day be in for it yet.
Old Jack was my stoker—"a pitch-in" he meant;
But he'd stoked for so many a year
That his mind had got sooty, his back rather bent,
And his eyes had a fiery leer.
He was good mate and true, though, to me in those days,
And many's the mile we have run.

Poor Jack! he was out and out queer in his way—
But, there, I shall never be done.
There was down in the tunnel, and always had been,
Beside of the switches, a hole,
With a lamp for the signals—a red and a green,
You know—on the top of a pole.
And here, like a sentry, a signalman stayed,
Controlling each train that should run;
For the up that came on—there, it made me afraid
To think what neglect would have done.
For, you see, while one up on the rail came full dash,
Were the red lamp of danger not shown,
A down might run on, cross the metals, and—crash!
How the line would with murder be strown!
And this in a tunnel with darkness and death—
This crash in a place black as ink:
Good God! just to think—there to give up your breath!
I tell you I shuddered to think.
And many's the time I have drawn a long sigh
As we rattled along past the box,
After seeing the signalman right, going by,
At his post, where the wires he blocks.
There came though a day when, I don't know how 'twere,
Jack Braddon was down in the dumps;
And I caught him a-looking at me with a stare,
As he stooped just to throw in the lumps.
"What's up, Jack?" I says, as we ran along trim,
"You'd look 'most as green as a leek,
If that phisog of yours as Wallsend warn't grim;
But there, man, look! screw down the break."
Jack screwed down the break, and we came to a stop,
And then, as we ran on once more,
Jack says to me soft, as he let his voice drop,
"Dick Dallas, who's on at the shore?"
We called that the "shore," there—the tunnel, I mean,
Where our line crossed the up, by the hole;
For it looked grim as any foul drain I have seen,
And black as our tender of coal.
"Who's on at the shore, Jack?" I says; "why, what odds?
There's steady chaps 'pointed, a heap."
"Right, Dick, then," says Jack; "and our lives they are God's—
But suppose as that chap was asleep!"
We were dashing along in a pretty good race,
With the mouth of the tunnel ahead,
When Jack spoke; and then if the cutting—each place—
Didn't spin round as if I'd been bled.
"Confound you!" I says, in a voice full of spite,
As I whistled, and put on more steam;
For there in the distance the green shone "all right,"
Though it seemed quite a sickening gleam.
"Here, shove on more coal," I says, "quick, and don't talk;
Wait till out of this tunnel we get.
You're a nice sorter mate," I says, "by a long chalk—
Not that I at your gammon shall fret."
I hardly had roared out them words to poor Jack,
When we dashed by the box with a leap;
And there in a moment, I saw, leaning back,
The signalman—*helpless!—asleep!!*

The next flash ahead showed an engine's two lamps—
My God! I can't tell you my fears.

"Turn steam off, turn on!" Why, look here, my
face damps,

As I tell you the tale after years.

"Screw down! curse you, screw!" He had done
it before;

But what was the use of the break?

The points they were clanking out loud, as I swore,

And the tunnel was filled by a shriek,

As the up engine's whistle rang out long and shrill,

And then—can't you picture it well?

Two trains in a tunnel—a crash—then all still;

And then each loud agonized yell.

The cries of the frightened more loud than the
crushed;

And then the loud hiss of the steam,

As from out of the bruised pipes it sullenly rushed;

And the wreck in the lamp's sickly gleam.

It's to me like a dream, as I giddily rise

From the midst of a great heap of coal;

My face and hands bleeding, all misty my eyes,

As I grope my way out from the hole.

Then I know I went back with the porters and
guards,

With the passengers trembling each man;

And struggled to drag out the injured there, barred

By each splintered-up carriage and van.

Not any too soon, for before we had done

The furnaces fired the heap;

And racing and licking the walls as they'd run,

The flames roared and rushed with a leap.

I remember, too, now, all the wounded and dead—

A score at the least when all told—

As they lay in the station; and then the guard
said,

"Where's Braddon?" and then I turned cold.

For it struck me at once, in the shore he must lie,

With the flames roaring hard at his side;

And of all who were present not one dared to try

To again tread that furnace-hole wide.

I thought of Jack's young uns, I thought of his
wife;

And then, with a "God help me!" ran

Down the great ruddy tunnel, now scared for my
life,

And climbed on, each corner to scan.

It was raging, that heat—it was scorching my skin,

And all beaten I felt I must fail;

When from under an axle that wedged him tight
in,

I heard my poor mate's helpless wail.

He called me by name. Then through smoke and
through steam,

With the fire even singing my head,

I managed to free him; and out, by the gleam

Of the fire, I bore him—but dead.

For, before I had stumbled o'er sleeper and rail

One half of the distance, he sighed—

"Oh, God help my little ones!" Then, with a
wail—

"Oh, Polly," he whispered, and died.

You asked me about this old mark here—this seam,

And the scar of the burn on my brow:

It was all in that pitch-in, that seems like a dream,

A signalman sleeping—that's how!

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER X.

THE week following the death-blow dealt
to my hopes by Miss M'Lachlan, as
recorded at the close of the last chapter, was
one long to be remembered at Carlton-
terrace.

Charles Woodward and Miss Matilda
Fernley were married—and, of all days of
the week, on a Friday!—at St. Stephen's.

Miss Matilda's vows, poor thing, were re-
corded in a charmingly inaudible tone; but,
though Woodward trembled visibly, he
spoke out his promise "to cherish and
keep" like a man, and I believe with the
firm intention of abiding by it, "for better
for worse."

Mr. Cornell gave away the bride, and
Miss Fernley and Miss Sharman were the
bridesmaids, while I officiated as best man.

The whole establishment, clerks and all,
assisted at the ceremony; and Ann the
untidy threw one of her old shoes after the
"happy pair" as they drove away, in their
own hired cab, to spend the honeymoon in
Wicklow.

The morning had been rainy, but it
cleared up as the newly married couple left
the church; and Miss Fernley, who was
rather of a superstitious turn, was rendered
happy, for she put firm faith in the Irish
proverb which declares "Blessed is the bride
that the sun shines on."

The breakfast was a very magnificent
affair. It was supposed to be furnished by
the friends of the bride, and I strongly sus-
pect old Mr. Cornell behaved handsomely
on the occasion; at all events, he presented
Miss Matilda—I beg pardon, Mrs. Wood-
ward—with a dressing-case.

Every one else made her some sort of a
present, too, down even to Ann the un-
tidy; who, like the maid-of-all-work at the
autocrat's boarding-house, presented the
bride with a copper ring, which Miss Ma-
tilda was gracious enough to wear.

Poor Miss Matilda! It was a long time
before I could bring myself to call her by
her newly acquired name.

The wedding trip only lasted ten days;
and, when the pair returned, I could see
that much of the romance had already worn
off on both sides;—not that the lady was

less devoted, but she seemed painfully humbled, I thought; and her husband was decidedly more morose than ever.

"It is too bad," he said to me the day after his return from their excursion. "That ointment affair is nothing but humbug, after all. I was looking at the Counsellor's head this morning, and it is as bald as ever."

"My dear fellow," I inquired, "is it true that you are to be ordained next week?"

"Perfectly true."

I sighed. I could not help it.

"What the deuce are you groaning about?" said he, with an oath.

I made him no answer, but abruptly left the room.

It must not be supposed that Charles Woodward was in the habit of using bad language before his acquaintance in a general way.

"No," he used to say when I would remonstrate with him about it; "I learned to swear out in Australia, and it is but fair you should have the benefit of the teaching—which you should not mind, being a native."

It was perfectly useless trying to reason with him when he got into one of his "tantrums," as he called the deplorable psychological phenomena he seemed to take an evil pleasure in displaying in my presence. I often suspected at that time that he was mad; but fear my suspicions on that head were groundless.

He himself used to declare that he was possessed by an evil spirit; and really any one who had seen him as he showed himself to me must have arrived at the same conclusion; but no one—at least then—ever did see him give full vent to his passion, and what I am afraid I must call his natural disposition, not even his wife; for he did command himself to a certain extent before her, although less careful than in the presence of strangers.

"I feel, old fellow," he would say, "as free to do as I like before you as if I were by myself. I don't know how it is, but it seems to me at times as if we must have been on intimate terms from all time, or perhaps before the beginning of time. I shouldn't wonder if we had inhabited the same body together in some former stage of our existence, wherein your good qualities so counterbalanced my evil disposition, that our host must have been a slow, humdrum, everyday sort of person, who jogged along his road, like Béranger's King, unnoticed

and unknown; whereas now we are separated, and you are an angel, while I am—well, your opposite!"

I used to laugh at him; but was, notwithstanding, inwardly conscious of some such feeling as he described. It was strange—it was more than strange; but I am not sure that I ever reached a solution of the difficulty.

He was ordained.

Charles Woodward and his wife took their departure for the scene of his new labours in the West—in my opinion, as badly matched a pair as you could meet with in the world.

CHAPTER XI.

I FELT very low-spirited for some time after the departure of the Rev. Charles Woodward and his wife; but I had too much to do to give way to my feelings, which was doubtless a fortunate circumstance. My examination was approaching.

Robert M'Lachlan, too, was about to pass through the same ordeal; and I was not without apprehension on his account, for though he assiduously attended the lectures, public and private, and was punctual at the hospital, he would not read; nor could all my persuasions induce him to do so.

However, he was clever and quick, and readily retained all he heard; whereas I had to plod and grind, and grind and plod, for days and weeks, to master what he would acquire in an hour.

I was not without apprehension for Bob; but I had much more fear for myself, and had been sorely tempted, more than once, to put off trying to pass until another session—a half-formed resolution out of which I had been laughed by my friend.

"Why, you are sure to be at the head of the class, Jonathan," he said one day; "and I shall be quite contented if I can sneak in at the tail."

"I am more afraid of the Professor than any one else," I said.

"I'm not," replied Bob. "He's just, and if he don't favour, won't treat us unfairly—which is more than I'd say for Ward, or Banksandbraes."

"Time will tell," I replied; and so it did.

Bob, to his intense astonishment, was first, with two hundred and eighty-nine marks (the maximum was three hundred);

whilst, to my great gratification, I was second, with fifty-two less than my friend.

"You'll dine with us to-day, of course?" he exclaimed as soon as we were released from the examination hall. "The gov and the mum both told me to be sure and bring you."

"I shall only be too glad to go," I replied.

"By the way, though," said my friend, "we must run round to the shop."

Mr. M'Lachlan was proprietor of one of the largest marts (gigantic establishments where they sell everything, from a needle to an anchor) in Dublin.

My friend's father was in his counting-house, and congratulated us both, very warmly, upon our success. I thought he looked gloomy; but before we left, he had brightened up considerably.

"I shall not be home until seven," he said, as he wished us good-bye. "Tell your mother, Robbin, not to wait dinner for me. I am proud of you, my son. God bless you!" Here he thrust something into Robert's hand, which, on inspection, proved to be a ten-pound note.

"Hurrah!" shouted my excitable friend when the agreeable discovery had been made—"that's what I call doing it hand-some. Hurrah!"

And he shouted and waved his hat until every one passing by stopped to look at us.

"Be the vartue av me oath!" exclaimed one dirty-looking fellow to a dirtier woman who was walking by his side, "thim collidge boys are half mad, so they are."

"Make haste," here cried Bob to me—"let's get home, I'm starving."

It was past five o'clock, and, with the exception of a bun each, we had eaten nothing since morning.

"Starvin'!" exclaimed the dirty man, with ineffable scorn. "Och! be the powers, an' it's like starvin' ye look this minnit!"

"Here, my good fellow," said Bob, tossing the man half a crown, "there's something for you, to warm you up, at all events."

The man picked up the unexpected bounty, and, with a leer, touched his dilapidated hat, but said nothing. The woman, his companion, however, curtseyed deeply to Bob, and exclaimed with unction—

"May the hivvins be yer bed; for a beautiful, good young gentleman! Och! God bless you! but ye've got the swate eyes—

faix, an' won't she be the looky girl that gits ye for a husband!"

"I say, drop that," cried Robert; and, hailing a passing car, we jumped up, one on each side. "The Grove, Clonskeagh," shouted my friend; "and mind you cut along like lightning."

And away we went, in the happiest frame of mind.

I sighed, but not from envy, as I beheld my friend hugged and kissed, and re-kissed and hugged again, by his mother, when he had told her the news of his great success.

"And Jonathan was second," he continued; "and the examiners complimented him as much as they did me."

"Nearly as much, Bob," I corrected.

"Quite as much," persisted my friend.

"Never mind, you have done very well," said Mrs. M'Lachlan, "and I am very proud of you both."

"I am sure you deserve great credit, young gentlemen," remarked Miss Marshall, with just the faintest suspicion of a sneer—"very great indeed!"

"Have you nothing to say, Emmy?" asked her brother, unheeding the governess's compliment, which I had acknowledged by a bow.

"Of course, I am very pleased," replied Miss M'Lachlan, blushing; "and congratulate you both."

"I'm awfully hungry," exclaimed Robert at this juncture; and his prosaic remark recalled me at once from dreamland, and I began to think that dinner would be very acceptable.

"We must wait till papa comes in," said Mrs. M'Lachlan, looking at her watch. "He cannot be very long now."

"By the way, mum, he told me to tell you he wouldn't be in till seven, and that you were on no account to wait dinner for him."

"Nevertheless, Robert, we must wait for him," replied Mrs. M'Lachlan.

"Come, that's rather too much of a good thing, mother," expostulated the son and heir.

"You can order up anything you like, my dear, for yourself and Mr. Cochrane; but I have never sat down to dinner yet without your papa."

"That's a good one, too!" exclaimed my friend to his mother. "Before you were married and all?"

Mrs. M'Lachlan smiled.

"I mean, of course, since we have kept house together," she said.

"It is not very far from seven now," interposed the governess, after consulting her watch.

"No," replied the lady of the house; "it is more than half-past six, so we shall not be much later than usual. Ring the bell, Robert, dear."

Robert obeyed.

"Thomas," said Mrs. M'Lachlan, addressing the servant who immediately responded to the summons, "your master will not be in until seven. Tell cook to put back the dinner."

"Very well, ma'am," replied the man, softly closing the door.

A few minutes afterwards we heard voices in angry contention, and the shuffling of feet, in the hall.

"What can be the matter?" mildly inquired Mrs. M'Lachlan, elevating her eyebrows.

"It's cook's voice," replied her daughter. "I suppose she's not pleased at your ordering the dinner to be put back, mamma."

The noise continuing, Robert was desired by his mother to ascertain the cause; and upon his opening the door we saw the man, Thomas, and a stout female engaged in a regular stand-up fight.

"Thomas!—cook!" said Mrs. M'Lachlan, angrily, "what is the meaning of this unseemly conduct?" an exclamation which had the effect of causing the combatants to immediately desist.

"Av ye plaze, ma'am," cried both the servants together, "it's Thomas, ma'am"—"it's cook, ma'am."

"Silence," commanded Mrs. M'Lachlan. "What is the matter, cook?"

"Matter, is it?" queried that personage, setting her arms akimbo, in a defiant attitude. "Faix, an' there's plinty the matter, ma'am. Hasn't that spalpeen there"—here she shook her fist at the wretched Thomas, whose face was even then bleeding from contact with her nails—"tould me ye sid I was to spile the dinner?"

"I sent you orders to put it back until the master came in."

"Is it me putt it back? Faix, an' I'll tell you what, ma'am, I aint goin' to putt it back for masther or misthress. On the table it'll go in five minnits—ate it or lave it thin, as ye plaze. But sure I have me charácter to kape, an' ye may soot yersilf, ma'am, as

soon as ye plaze. Putt back me dinner, an' spile it! Faix, it's me that won't—there!"

And she actually snapped her fingers in her mistress's face.

The woman was evidently intoxicated, but it was scarcely judicious of Miss Marshall to tell her so.

"Is it me," exclaimed the infuriated virago, shaking her fist at the terrified governess—"is it me that's dhrunk? Av ye dar' say sich a thing, it's yer wig I'll be afther tarin' aff ye, ye skinny owl' bag o' bones!"

"Cook, leave the room instantly," commanded her mistress—for the woman had advanced into the middle of the apartment.

"To be shure," replied the woman, trying to imitate Mrs. M'Lachlan's English accent—"to be shure, now; but it's warnin' I'm givin' ye, ma'am. Ye'll be afther sootin' yerself, av ye plaze."

"Leave the room," repeated Mrs. M'Lachlan. "Robert, will you put that woman out?"

Robert, however, was incapable of moving. He had almost laughed himself into a state of collapse, and was bundled upon a settee in the most absurd and helpless fashion.

Emma appeared to be rather alarmed; but poor Miss Marshall was absolutely cowering in a corner, in a state of abject terror.

I was nearly as bad as Robert. I had not laughed so much for a long time. The woman's appearance was comical in the extreme. During her struggle with the footman her cap had fallen off, and her hair had become unfastened, and hung in grizzly elflocks round her scarlet face; which reminded me so irresistibly of the sun as seen through one of our Australian fogs, that I, too, laughed myself into a condition of semi-imbecility.

"There's no nade for ye to stur, Masther Robert, dear—I'm goin'. Good avenin' to ye, ma'am, an' ladies an' gentlemen all."

And the cook, with a comprehensive curtsey, retired—somewhat unsteadily—to her own dominions, threatening vengeance on poor Thomas as she passed him in the hall.

"What disgraceful conduct!" exclaimed Miss Marshall, emerging from her corner as soon as her enemy was fairly out of hearing. "I hope, Mrs. M'Lachlan, you will discharge

her at once. The woman is shamefully intoxicated."

"I am afraid she has taken more than is good for her," replied the lady of the house—"poor thing. But she is the best cook we have ever had, and I suppose I must make some allowance for her injured feelings. I have no doubt she will be very penitent to-morrow."

"I declare," exclaimed Robert, once more sitting upright; "I haven't enjoyed anything so much for an age."

CHAPTER XII.

MR. M'LACHLAN came in at last; and the dinner—with the exception, perhaps, of the soup—was none the worse for waiting.

Decidedly the master of the house was not in good spirits. He listened to his son's account of the scene we had just witnessed as if his thoughts were deeply engaged elsewhere; and when the exaggerated narrative was, much to the footman's relief, concluded, he sighed; and then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, forced a smile, and said—

"Ha! yes—very absurd, to be sure."

This remark, and the tone in which it was spoken, proved an effectual damper upon further conversation.

It was not a custom at The Grove for the gentlemen to remain in the dining-room for any length of time after the ladies; but, on this occasion, as Bob and I were about following them, Mr. M'Lachlan beckoned me to stay.

Robert looked surprised, and lingered an instant at the door.

"I wish to speak to Cochrane for a few minutes, Robert," he said, slightly glancing at his son.

The hint was sufficient, and Bob was off like a shot.

I was astonished, and felt myself change colour several times. What could he want with me?

I fear my conscience must have been rather uneasy within me just at that time, or why should I have trembled at the thought of a private interview with one whom it was the dearest wish of my heart one day to call my second-father?

Doubtless, I had not done by him exactly as I should have wished him to do by me, had our positions been reversed; hence my guilty trembling. I resolved upon making

an open breast of the whole matter; then let him forbid me the house if he pleased.

I expected reproof, and was not in the least prepared for the conversation that ensued.

"Take another glass, Cochrane."

"No, thank you," I replied.

"As you please," returned the master of the house, resuming his seat. "Sit down. I want to ask you a question or two about something that has been perplexing me very much of late."

He paused.

"Yes?" I at length ventured, interrogatively; but Mr. M'Lachlan did not reply for some seconds. He was evidently uneasy, and regretted having to speak to me.

"Mr. M'Lachlan," I began again, "I feel that I have been to blame; but—"

"Blame? Not at all," he exclaimed, looking up, and immediately casting down his eyes upon the table.

I began to breathe more freely.

"I scarcely knew what I was doing—" I continued.

He looked up at me again.

"You will think me a fool, I dare say, Cochrane," he interrupted, playing with a bunch of seals and coins that hung from his watch guard; "but, if you only knew the anxiety this matter has caused me, the worry and perplexity I have endured for the last few weeks in consequence, you would pity me."

He paused, and looked at me in an appealing manner. I never felt more mystified in my life, and could do nothing but stare at him, utterly at a loss to know what he meant.

"Yes," he continued, "it comes between me and my rest, as well as between me and my business, and I have resolved a dozen times to have an explanation with you; but the fear of ridicule, I suppose, has hitherto kept me from broaching the subject. However, I rely upon your good sense and gentlemanly feeling to give me a true answer, and keep the secret."

I groaned; and, with tears in my eyes, gasped—

"I have never breathed a syllable to any one but Robert—"

"I know that," he interrupted. "I can perfectly understand your feelings. Nevertheless, your secret has oozed out, and, I am ashamed to confess, has upset me greatly; for I had long persuaded my-

self that such a thing was totally impossible."

I began to feel utterly bewildered.

"Impossible?"

"Yes, so I had flattered myself; but what I have heard has completely routed my self-complacent scepticism, and left me as nervous as a child in the dark."

Mr. M'Lachlan was losing his senses; or was he afraid I intended eloping with his daughter?

"If you think," I said, "that I have harboured any sinister design—"

For the life of me, I could not express myself more simply.

He interrupted me.

"Not at all, my dear fellow. I am sure you spoke in perfect sincerity; but, nevertheless, you may have been mistaken; and that is exactly the question I want you to answer."

"Certainly," I replied, critically examining the pattern of the table cloth. "I may have been under a delusion, for I have not dared to speak."

"Ha!" exclaimed my host, brightening up, and slapping his hand energetically on the table, so as to make the glasses and decanters ring. "I was certain it was all nonsense. That young rascal Robert—one of his usual tricks, I'll be bound."

"Did Robert tell you—"

"Of course he did, my dear fellow. You don't suppose a youngster like Bob could hold his tongue? You told him; and, as a matter of consequence, he must relieve himself by telling some one else; and, unfortunately for my peace of mind, he selected me for his confidant."

"And may I ask, sir," I said, reassured by his friendly tone and manner, "what your own views respecting this matter might be?"

"My views? Why, that it's all nonsense, as you have yourself just admitted."

Once more I was completely at fault.

"As I admitted?" I repeated, helplessly.

"Yes; at least, so I understood."

"Understood?"

"So I supposed."

"Mr. M'Lachlan, I have not the faintest idea what we have been talking about. I had imagined, until this moment, it was about you—"

"About mine?" he interrupted. "No, Cochrane—about you, you mean."

THE CAPTAIN'S "DAWG."

I HAD nothing to do with my own manufacture, so surely I am not to blame for a strange tendency that my legs have to appear as if moulded by nature to fit the outside of a horse. Coarse people would say they were bow legs; but let them be what they may, I believe it is entirely owing to the shape of those legs that Captain Bowker's dog always made a dead set at me.

It was hard, certainly; for in our quiet little genteel village, inhabited by people of small income and of that peculiar faith which believes old age the meridian of life, has credence in tea, and treats rubbers at whist as the height of orthodoxy, I was, I am certain, the most peaceful and inoffensive of men.

Oak Lodge had been empty for two years, and we had all wondered who was to be the new tenant time after time; when all at once, when we had handed it over to damp and rats, Captain Bowker hired it, and took possession.

Captain Bowker had a dog.

It is about that dog I write; for the number of van-loads of furniture, the extent of the Captain's income, even his age—matters all thoroughly discussed at our evening meetings—were forgotten by me in the contemplation of that dog.

The Captain had named his pet Burke—whether after the sublime and beautiful, or after the renowned and gifted being who lives in waxwork, and earned his fame by an ingenious usage of the pitch of Burgundy, carefully spread upon sheets of leather, and treated as plaisters, I never knew; but he would have been in as pleasant odour in our village if called by any other name. Time after time have I seen him hanging viciously on to the skirts of some poor old woman, and looked up and down the road in the hope that a passing vehicle would distract his attention to the extent of setting him at his favourite pursuit of nibbling the horse's heels; thus freeing his victim, and affording a prospect—faint, certainly, but possible—that he might be trampled to death.

A wretch! Our dislike was, of course, mutual; and I have often thought, when the brute came barking and snarling at me, how satisfactory it would have been, could I have performed the celebrated American feat, and, thrusting my hand and arm down his gaping throat, have seized him by the tail, turned

him inside out, and left him helpless in the road.

I never saw that trick performed, and question my own dexterity; but the plan is American, and, of course, true.

I did not want to hate that dog; but, though I fought against the feeling, I found myself at last compelled to look upon him with a virulence of feeling that would have made me Lucrezia Borgia-ize him with the first drug that came to hand.

Yes, I could have poisoned that dog, and felt all the while that I was performing a meritorious action. No doubt he had good qualities—every dog must be so constituted—but if so, they were latent or hidden away, for no outsider could discover a germ. As for the Captain, who knew him well, he said he was a wonderful dog; and a great affection between them was the result—an affection displayed by the master in kicks and language of the most unparliamentary character, and by the dog in displays of his snowy fangs and sundry grabs.

"Bites, sir?" said the Captain, as proudly as if speaking of wounds received in action during his old campaigns. "Bites, sir? Yes, sir, scores of them. I never kick that dog in my boots, without his biting me. Slippers he don't mind. Look here!"

As he spoke, the Captain bestowed a sharp kick in the ribs of the reclining Burke, to which the latter responded by fastening his fangs in the offending Wellington.

"There's pluck, sir—there's courage," said the Captain. "If I'd had fifty men with that noble animal's courage, I'd have taken the Redan at the first assault. I never saw so much sterling pluck condensed in so small a compass. I train him to it, sir; so that he forms quite a garrison in himself. Now, look here, sir."

I was visiting the Captain, and I followed him into the room which he called his study—a retreat whose books consisted of old Army Lists and Sporting Gazettes; while scientific instruments were represented by swords, pistols, sticks, foils, and various ancient pieces of rustiness, whose original purpose was the slashing or boring of the human form divine.

But these minor affairs were eclipsed by a strange object suspended from the ceiling. Upon my first entry I started, for I could have declared that a ragged Irishman had been seized with a suicidal mania, and, ceasing to fardels bear, had given one—himself—to a piece of rope. However, a second look

showed me that the pensile object was merely a dummy, consisting of a pair of old trousers and a great coat, stuffed out so as to bear some resemblance to a man. A mask of the fourpenny Guy Fawkes type supplied the face, and the whole was crowned by the most dilapidated hat I ever saw.

For the moment, I was puzzled; but the purpose of the "mawkin" was soon betrayed by the Captain exclaiming—

"Now, boy! Good dawg, then! At him, Burke!"

Burke did "at him," for the wretch made but one bound to reach the dummy; and then, apparently altering his mind, he couched and laid his head upon his paws.

"Get up, you scoundrel!" roared the Captain, kicking the adjured beast; and with the regular result, a seizure of his boot.

"Doesn't that hurt?" I asked.

"Nips my gouty toe a bit; but it doesn't matter so long as he doesn't go through the leather. That's roused him, though. Good dawg, then!"

And now I learned the result of training, and how it was that Burke had become the dread of the whole village; for, leaping up, he seized the figure by its ragged coat, and swung to and fro, shaking it fiercely; the Captain, meanwhile, in ecstasies, rubbing his hands, and cheering the dog, until the cloth gave way, and Burke came to the ground with a piece in his mouth, which piece he proceeded to tear methodically to pieces, resisting all attempts to make him renew his attack.

"There, sir," said the Captain—"that's teaching a dog to be sharp, upon a humane principle. Entirely my own idea."

I soon after took my leave, thinking of what an acquisition the Captain would have been to a slave plantation in the good old times, if only as a trainer of the Cuban hound.

Perhaps it was from a desire to preserve the tail of my coat intact that I walked backward to the gate of Oak Lodge; for Burke was close behind, sniffing strangely, and evidently on the watch for a chance to pin me in some vulnerable spot.

"He won't hurt you," shouted the Captain, as he closed the door; but I was not reassured by his words. I never am, by that expression; for I never knew a person yet who would own to the foibles of his own dog.

However, I disappointed Burke by keep-

ing an armed front prepared for his charge—presenting my umbrella ferule, and only breathing freely when I had passed the gate.

But, with all his vice, Burke was no hero amongst his brethren, for he would flee ignominiously from the smallest cur that ever breathed; while as to cats, the most playful kitten would act upon his haughty tail like a meddlesome finger upon a sensitive plant—making it droop and shrivel almost out of sight. He had no antipathy, though, to birds; and endless were the complaints concerning his onslaughts upon ducks and chickens, whose heads he devoured—urged thereto by some strange epicurean taste—leaving the bodies in the dust.

As to the ducks, he would dart into the water, and swim after them until he had regularly hunted them down; while fowls he captured by a side bound, which took effect when they were off their guard.

The Captain vowed that it was all stuff—that his dog was too well fed at home to steal; and it was not until summoned to the county court that he would compromise the matter, and pay the loss sustained by Widow Woods, who sold eggs, and who had lost to Burke a favourite hen, which she always spoke of to her neighbours as her “best Brahmin.”

Kicking and biting must have been rife between master and dog; for, in spite of his generally villainous aspect, Burke wore at our next meeting a more hangdog look than ever. He looked more untrustworthy and thievish, and there was a something in his eye which seemed to say, “Ah, you think I’m a rogue, so I may as well deserve it.” All the same, he was a dog of such an excellent understanding, that he could not brook ill names. I believe conscientiously that he would sooner have received a kick than an ill name. Look him in the face, and call him an ill-looking thief, or a mongrel hound, and he would snarl, gnash his teeth, and growl at you with wrath.

I believe that you might have driven that dog mad by stoning him with hard words. He bit the butcher savagely for calling him a beast; and, on the experientia docet principle, I never ventured to throw a dirty word at him till I was beyond his reach.

If you wished to annoy Burke, the best way was to screen yourself behind a breastwork of fence, and then, looking down upon the grinning cur, taunt him with his misdeeds. He had offended me more seriously than

usual one day, so I treated him as above—laughing, when I did not feel alarmed, at his frantic efforts to scale my stronghold, till, in his blind fury, he gave up leaping, and began to mine, soon making a hole beneath the fence sufficiently large to admit his nose, when I persuaded him to desist with my umbrella point. This had the effect of making him beat a retreat—a movement which afforded me the most intense satisfaction, for I had been considering whether such a step was not a bounden duty on the writer’s part.

It might have been thought that, with such a hatred of ill names, Burke would have loved those of softer sound. But no, it was not so. Call him “Good dog,” and he would show his teeth; “Burke, old boy,” and he would snap them; after aiming at your leg. He was a misanthrope, in the broadest sense of the term. I used, at one time, to think his bad habits were produced by hard usage; but, at a later period, I found out it was his nature, and that the proper way to caress him was with gentle endearments from the end of a good thick stick.

All heroes have had failings. The bravest of men have had one vulnerable spot where the fiend cowardice could find an entrance. Why, then, should it be expected to find a dog free from the failing? I found Burke out one day when taking a walk.

I was returning leisurely—having looked at my watch, and decided that, making allowance for my housekeeper, Mrs. Stokes’s Dutch clock being always half an hour too fast, by walking leisurely home I should arrive just at the time when the fowl had reached its proper state of brownness. Perhaps other musings were in my mind. If so, they were driven away by a sudden cry of distress, and, hurrying forward, I beheld my old neighbour, Mrs. Fogrum, in the jaws of the monster. In other words, that dog had fast hold of the bottom of Mrs. Fogrum’s dress, and was dragging in one direction, while the good lady was crying out lustily, pulling the opposite way, and making feeble demonstrations at the brute’s head by dabbing at it with the doubling-up handle of her old-fashioned parasol.

Here was an opportunity for displaying the chivalry of my nature—beauty in distress. Well, no; not beauty, but respectability, and weakness, and elderlyness—I will not say age. But I was unarmed!

We all know how St. George, and St. Andrew, and others of the Seven Champions, who went about like travelling ironmongers, with their stock-in-trade upon their shoulders, did doughty deeds of valour in aid of the gentler sex; but, then, see how they were cased in mail—how lobster-like they were, from an offensive and defensive point of view; whilst I was merely covered with shepherd's plaid, and had, for offensive weapon, nothing but a small penknife troubled with a spinal complaint, which caused it to open and shut at unexpected times from very weakness.

What was I to do? There was Mrs. Fogrum crying for aid, perspiring with a profuseness that affected her front, and the gathers of her dress were parting rapidly from her bodice. [This is correct, O male! I had the terms revised by a lady.] The sight was too much for me; and determining to do or die, I rushed forward—very nervously, though—and determined to jump over the low wall, and to pull Mrs. Fogrum after me.

Just then I saw in the roadway a half brick that had evidently fallen from a cart. It was a weapon not to be despised, and running to it, I stooped to secure the prize, and hurl it at the offending beast.

As he saw me advance, Burke began to back, growling defiance as he performed a strategic movement, which consisted in sticking tenaciously to his prey, and trying to drag her away with him.

Seizing the right moment, I darted at and secured the brickbat, and the next stride or two would have seen me over the wall of safety, taking aim at Captain Bowker's dog; but, to my intense astonishment, no sooner did I stoop, than Burke yelled furiously as he quitted his hold, struck his colours—I mean, lowered his tail—and tore away as hard as he could go, the following brickbat—which I levelled with all my might, but which missed him, of course—adding speed to the wretch's flight.

I pass over Mrs. Fogrum's gratitude, and the pins she busily stuck in her dress to hold up the gathers—a supply of the tiny, pointed necessities being obtained from a little cushion, shaped like a heart, and carried somewhere in cavernous recesses reached by plunging her arm down amongst the folds of her dress, nearly up to the shoulder. Her gratitude was profuse; but I shrank from it with a Wellerian sense of danger at hand.

I shuddered lest she should take to sending me pots of jelly, or pots of jam; for I believe in my "Pickwick," and the aphorisms of the stout old coachman; for, behold, Mrs. Fogrum was a widow.

How I rejoiced, when safely at home, over the discovered weakness of the creature Burke! Why, I went out again that very afternoon, before digestion had thoroughly set in, on purpose to attack the wretch, picking up sundry stones by the way, and carrying them in my pocket, lest we might encounter where stones were scarce. And, besides, I knew that in mine enemy's presence I could go through the form of taking a stone from my pocket, dropping it, and picking it up again.

The afternoon was warm, and the stones so heavy, that at times I trembled for my own gathers, and thought with envy of Mrs. Fogrum's pins, as, passing her abode, I chanced to look up, and saw her waving me a salute.

But where was Burke? If I had not wanted him for experimental purposes, that dog fiend would have been visible here, there, and everywhere; but as if divining the talisman—men, I should say—which I carried about me, the wretch would not show.

I visited all his favourite haunts. I walked past the butcher's, where the joints were all hung out of his reach, on account of past depredations—Flaire, the butcher, "not making a bother, sir; because, you see, the Captain is a customer." But there was no Burke sniffing about, and licking his glistening ivory fangs.

I went round by the pond; but the cocks and hens pecked in peace, while the snow-white ducks preened their feathers, or made long, dark lanes as they swam across the billiard-table-like surface covered with weed.

Phew! how hot it was. I dropped a stone, and felt lighter by a couple of pounds of rough granite. Five minutes after I dropped another, as I continued my walk; for the pieces banged against my legs with their sharpest angles, and made them sore.

I tried the lane by the Captain's house. No Burke! The common, where there were donkeys with heels to bite, and small pigs, evidently formed expressly by nature for a dog to hunt; but no Burke. I walked farther, to where Mrs. Pringle's gray geese stretched their necks, and clanged; but there was no Burke in difficulties with the

gander. A coward! I felt at last so sure that he would not show himself, that, one by one, I dropped three more stones; and then, in spite of failing to test the dog's weakness, I felt quite elate as I walked homeward, and, taking the last stone from my pocket, I cast it away—just as Burke turned a corner, and came at me full tilt.

For a moment or two I was paralyzed, and could not stir; while, savage and open-mouthed, the brute came at me. But my presence of mind returned; and backing quickly as he came on, I stood, just in time, behind the lump of granite I had let fall. Then, just as the brute made a rush to leap upon me, I stooped, and seized the stone.

"Chy—ike, chy—ike, yelp, yelp, yelp!" Burke turned and fled—fled so sharply, that his legs slipped from under him, and he fell heavily upon his side; but only to leap up again, and run as if for his life, nose to the ground, ears flying, and his tail tucked close in between his legs.

As for me, I was too wise to send after him my ammunition, holding it lightly in my hand as I smiled in triumph over my conquest.

Burke has lost his prestige; for there is not a man, woman, or child in the village that fears him now in the least—for I lost no time in making his weak point known. It has become a favourite pastime with the boys to pretend to pick up stones whenever Burke comes in sight, and to launch them at their late tyrant; while of late he has become so crestfallen and cowardly, that he hardly shows at all, since the tiniest child stooping to pick up a stone can put him to flight.

He stays now at the Lodge, and seems to be trying with his master who can the sooner grow fat; and I feel sure that, before long, there will be rejoicings in our village, for the news must come that our canine enemy has expired from a fit of apoplexy.

TABLE TALK.

HERE is an opportunity for those who are tired of doing Switzerland, yawning at watering-places, and being eaten up by extortionate hotel-keepers—being eaten instead of eating: the Yosemite Valley is to be reached on wheels by Pacific rail and turbulent waggon. The falls are greater than ever; the verdure is spring-like; there

are, O shooters, "deer by the thousand;" and O, ye of the gentle craft, "trout by the million." Rocks three-quarters of a mile high, a fall, known as the Grizzly Bear, over half a mile high or deep. There is the thunder of Niagara, the melting snow of the ice-clad mountains, hard by—as American distances go—the big trees. And all offered as a pleasure trip. Who'll go? It is not quite half-way round the world, and to be done as an autumn holiday.

WHEN IS THE Postmaster-General going to take compassion upon the dwellers in suburban London, and complete the work he has begun? He has given us pillar-boxes in which we may post our letters any time during the twenty-four hours which make our day; but our packets—what of them? The post-offices are closed at eight o'clock of an evening, box and all; and should we post our little packet—"open for inspection" at both ends—in the pillar-box, transmission will be delayed.

ANOTHER MURMUR. The tramway cars were, it is presumed, introduced as an improvement upon the frowsy old omnibus, in whose depths we are half-suffocated, if we do not risk our neck in a hazardous climb to the roof while the vehicle is in motion. Certainly the car is an improvement, but it is "far from puffed." The interior is high and airy, but rendered horribly offensive by the odour of the paraffin lamps; there is room to walk down the centre, but the seats are licensed to carry more passengers than they will conveniently hold, for your nine a-side seems always as full with eight as your eleven a-side car does with ten, and the last comer is scowled upon as a contemptible interloper who should be looked down, when a slight brass arm-like division could easily give each passenger his or her purchased space. And now when entering one is confronted with notices of the penalties to be suffered if we attempt to defraud the company, or try to secure a seat for the return journey before a car has quite reached its destination.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 289.

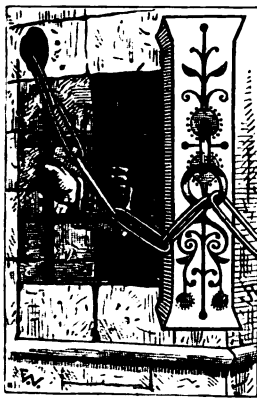
July 12, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER III.

A TROUBLOUS TIME.



—PRISONER! Nonsense—absurd!" exclaimed Rivière, turning pale as ashes. "Sir Richard, this is some mistake—will you explain? You, mon ami," he cried to the officer—"you have mistaken me for some one else."

"Louis Rivière, gentleman, Rue d'Auvergne, numero vingt," said the officer, coldly, reading from a paper in his hand.

"But for what? Good Heavens! They suspect me of the attempt. Mon Dieu—my poor Marie!"

At a sign from their leader, a couple of gendarmes placed themselves one on either side of the agonized man, who darted from them to Sir Richard's side, exclaiming, hoarsely—

"This is a mistake; but I know not how it will end. You are a man—you have your wife. Think of my feelings—my pauvre Marie. Will you—will Miladi Lawler go to her, say a few words of comfort—watch over her till I am again at liberty?"

"Indeed, we'll do all we can. Yes, yes—of course," cried Lady Lawler, excitedly; for she had entered, and heard the latter part of Rivière's appeal.

The next moment the little Frenchman was bending over the soft, white hand extended to him, to leave upon it a tear; there was the clanking noise of sabres on the floor, the door closed and the sounds died away as

Lady Lawler sank weeping into a chair; while her husband stood silent and moody, as he passed in review the events of the past two days.

"I think it is time we left Paris," he said at last, gruffly. "Nice mess we've made of it!"

"What! and leave these poor people, who played the Samaritan to you, in the midst of trouble? Richard, I'm ashamed of you!" exclaimed Lady Lawler, impetuously. "I really don't think I should have married you if I had known that you could be so mean and shabby. I do hope Cli will not grow up like you. You can leave, though, when you please."

"I go?" said Sir Richard, staring.

"Yes, you can go. And you had better ask papa to come over and take care of me, while I see to your friends, whom you want to leave in the lurch."

"My friends—lurch!"

"Yes; your friends and mine, Dick. I am ashamed of you, that I am. But do you think I can't see through it all—you great silly fellow? You're jealous. And all because that nice little loveable Frenchman was polite, according to his nature. There, don't touch me. I haven't patience with you."

"But, Addy," pleaded Sir Richard.

"Don't Addy me, sir. Only think! To treat me like this—and so soon! What will it be at the end of—"

There were very strong evidences here of hysterics, and tears were already flowing abundantly. But vows, promises, and offers to do everything the lady wished had their due effect, and at last there was peace in the handsome suite of rooms occupied by Sir Richard Lawler and his lady; while, in a fever of excitement, Louis Rivière impatiently paced the stone floor of his allotted cell.

Truth to tell, Sir Richard Lawler felt but little gratitude towards the man who had

been arrested in his apartments; but, urged thereto by his lady, he used every effort to procure Rivière's release, while Lady Lawler called again and again on the prisoner's wife, but only to receive rebuff after rebuff. Marie Rivière mistrusted her motives, and received her advances with unmistakable coldness.

But all Sir Richard's efforts were vain. Rivière had been denounced as one of the plotters against the King's life; and, in company with two more, was condemned to a long term of imprisonment; while three others were sentenced to death. The three former were considered to be the least culpable; hence their escape from the terrible penalty.

Sir Richard had a couple of interviews with Rivière, when, in a blunt, half-sympathizing manner, he explained how Madame Rivière had declined all offers of assistance, preferring apparently to trust to Monsieur Lemaire; and ended by saying that they departed shortly for their home in London, where he, Sir Richard, would at any future time be glad to see M. Rivière if he would give him a call, and to that effect he gave the prisoner a card.

Rivière smiled as the door closed, and thought bitterly of the future, and of the improbability of his ever seeing the pompous, weak baronet again. Then he thought of his wife's position, and of her behaviour to Lady Lawler; and then he sat down upon his iron bedstead, to bury his face in his hands, and wonder whether those poor wretches whose heads had fallen by the guillotine's knife could suffer more than did he as day after day and week after week crept on in the customary prison routine.

The thoughts of his wife at times almost maddened him, as he recalled the past, and then thought of how, to all intents and purposes, he was condemned to death; for he was buried in these prison walls, cut off from all communication with the outer world. To those outside—wife, relations, all—he was dead, passed away from the busy world of life. And Marie? Well—why should she not?—she might marry again.

When he had been allowed he had written; and during the interviews permitted while his trial had been in progress, he had given all the instruction he could to his wife; and then he had given way to the despair that oppressed him, sleeping or waking.

Months passed, and he was still in France, moved from prison to prison, and wondering whether one of the distant colonies was to be his home, when there came a change, and he was placed in a larger cell, with a companion, to pass a further term of this death in life—with one of those who had been implicated in the deed which had been the cause of his own arrest.

CHAPTER IV.

A REVELATION.

TWELVE feet by twelve, fair measure. Four steps forward—the stone wall—turn; four steps backward—the wall—turn. Four steps forward, four steps backward—hour after hour, day after day, week after week; till the thought would come upon the prisoner that his acts were like those of a wild beast in his cage, when he would throw himself upon his rough bed, and lie and glare at his fellow-prisoner, seated where the light streamed in through the window bars, bony-fingered, and plaiting straw.

A contraction of the facial muscles, as Rivière thought of his own once busy fingers—fingers which he felt that he could only employ now in one way, in tearing at his prison walls; a contortion of the body; and then he would jerk himself round, so that he lay trying to pierce with his eyes the massive stones of his cell—mentally seeing the bright sunshine, the green trees, his own peaceful home, the face of his wife. And then would come clouds over the sunshine—the explosion, the arrest, the trial; and his thoughts would grow so agonizing that he would strive to lull them with fatigue, by leaping up, and once more pacing, like some imprisoned animal, up and down the length of his cell.

"Tonnerre!" he one day exclaimed, angrily snatching the plaited straw from his fellow-prisoner's hand, "you can be at rest in your guilt, while I——"

He checked himself; for in an instant he saw the pettiness of his anger, as his companion's face was turned gently towards him, his hands raised deprecatingly, and a smile that would have disarmed the fiercest wrath met his own angry glare.

Rivière was conquered; and, slowly crossing the cell, he picked up the straw plait, returned it to his fellow-prisoner, and then once more threw himself upon his pallet.

But not for long. Lithe and active, goaded by the recollection of his position,

he again sprang from the bed, his breast heaving as if for air; and then, with a bound, he leaped up at the window, clasped the bars with his fingers, and by sheer muscular force drew himself up so as to gaze out at a dreary blank wall.

Then came the sound of a heavy pace outside, a few muttered words, an angry reply from the prisoner, a blow or two from the butt-end of a musket, and, with bruised and bleeding fingers, Rivière fell back into his cell, to stand shaking impotently a throbbing hand at the blank wall, and hiss at the aggressor the one word "Dog!"

"How long will it take us to go quite mad?" he exclaimed, after once more striding up and down. "I am half mad now; but I mean quite, so as to be beyond the reach of thought and the recollections of the bygone."

There was no reply from the straw plaiter, and another interval of pacing up and down ensued, when Rivière paused before his patient companion.

"Look here, silent Pierre," he cried, and the young man's pale face was turned up towards him, though the busy fingers still twisted straw after straw into its appointed place—"look here. I thought to find rest with a comrade; but you only madden me. You know that I was not in the plot. I told you when I was brought in."

"Yes, I declared it at the trial."

"I have told you a hundred times, have I not, that I was standing in the crowd with my friend?"

"With your friend," assented Pierre.

"Yes, with Lemaire."

"With whom?" said the other.

"With my friend, Etienne Lemaire, chirurgien—have I not told you his name a hundred times?"

"No; you never mentioned it till now."

"Wait, and I will tell you. I was standing to see the King pass, when there was the explosion, and I was borne away in the crowd with the English miladi."

"But you were denounced, Rivière."

"Yes, I was denounced," said the other, bitterly, "by some Government spy."

"You were denounced by Etienne Lemaire."

"What?"

There was a minute's pause, during which Rivière glared at his companion.

"You were denounced by Etienne Lemaire."

"I said how long did it take to make men quite mad, Pierre," said Rivière, with a ghastly face, as he came nearer. "I know now: just as long as you have been in prison; for you are mad to declare such a thing. Do I not tell you that Lemaire was my friend?"

"He may have had some motive."

"Motive? How could he have? He was my friend, and I lent him money—ample—thousands of francs. He lived often at my table. He attended my wife when she was ill."

"Your wife? She was very handsome, was she not?"

"Was?—she is! Une ange—and she is left to despair—to—Oh! mon Dieu."

Rivière groaned as if stricken by a sudden blow; the veins in his forehead swelled, his mouth twitched, and he glared at his companion as if he would have sprung at him. Then, by an effort, he recovered himself, saying with a grim smile—

"I am better now. It was a foolish thought—an inspiration from the tempter—evil promptings from the father of lies. But, tchut! Do not name my wife again. The air of this hideous cage contaminates her name."

He walked up and down again for a few minutes before pausing once more in front of the straw-plaiter, and, taking hold of his work—

"Why do you do this?" he said.

"Why do I do it! Why have men carved the stones of these prison walls, written upon their linen with a fish-bone pen? For rest and forgetfulness. It is something to do—something to kill thought—something to achieve. Try it—you."

"Pish!" exclaimed Rivière, fretfully.

And again he paced the cell; but only to stop once more, and gaze in his companion's face as if he expected him to speak.

"It was bad for you—that workshop of yours," said Pierre. "They said at the trial it was full of deadly mechanism."

"Yes, yes—the fools, the idiots. Lathe, tools, chemicals—my amusements from a boy. They seized and destroyed them all, saying that each innocent machine—upon which I had lavished years of thought and toil—was a diabolical construction. But you, you—you were in the plot!"

"Yes," said Pierre, slowly, "I was in the plot. I was dragged into it. I could not help myself."

"And I suffer—she suffers. We are called upon to bear the punishment of your crimes. Fiend—dog!"

"Help—help!" screamed the younger prisoner, faintly; but his voice sounded half stifled, for Rivière had seized him by the throat, and borne him back against the wall.

The struggle was but short, for the cries brought in the gaoler and a couple of sentries, one of whom sent Rivière staggering back with a heavy blow from the butt end of his musket; and the next minute they dragged him across the cell to his bed, threw him on it, and secured him there with straps.

"Don't hurt him," pleaded the younger man; "it was all my fault—I angered him. He will be still if you set him free. We are friends now, Rivière, are we not?"

The latter nodded sullenly; and after a few moments' consideration, the gaoler leant over him, and cast loose the straps, grumbling loudly the while, as he snatched and pulled at the buckles, causing the prisoner acute pain. Then, muttering threats of what he should report, he slowly left the cell with the sentries, and the prisoners were once more alone.

"Why did you not let them punish me?" hissed Rivière.

"Because you were only mad for the time, and I did not wish to be here alone," said Pierre. "Together, it is more bearable."

"Yes, I am a madman—a wild beast," exclaimed Rivière. "My thoughts seem to be all barbed points, and goad me into fury. You will forgive me, though, Pierre. You could not withhold your pardon if you knew all I suffered. Will you take my hand?"

He held it out, and it was taken frankly.

"Yes, yes, I forgive you," said Pierre; and then, with a sigh, he returned to his straw-plaiting, while Rivière resumed his hurried walk backward and forward.

After a while he paused once more before the straw-plaiter.

"Tell me," said he, "how many days since the trial?"

The young man drew from his pocket a small bag, out of which he took five round pieces of bone, and a number of short scraps of straw.

"I cannot recollect without these," he said, counting them over. "See, here are

five bones, each stands for fifty; forty-five straws. Two hundred and ninety-five days."

"Mon Dieu!" ejaculated Rivière, dashing his hands to his forehead. "Two hundred and ninety-five days and nights of agony! But it cannot last—it cannot last."

"You must work," said Pierre. "It is the only rest."

Rivière seemed not to hear him; but paced the cell in the same restless, wolfish way till he stopped suddenly before his busy-fingered companion.

"Look here, look here!" he cried, gesticulating fiercely. "I know what you think. You would have it that my friend had designs of his own—that he wished me away; but, pah! I laugh at all such folly. It is not true. I drive such thoughts away as you would so many scraps of your straw."

He sat down upon the edge of his bed, with a scornful laugh curling his lips, and remained there, buried in thought, until the last ruddy light of evening had faded from the cell—till the heavy, echoing sound of steps was heard in the stone passage. Then bolts were drawn with a heavy clang, and a gaoler, guarded by two soldiers, whose muskets gleamed in the light they carried, thrust in a black loaf of sour bread and some water. The door was then banged to and bolted, and, after the echoing footsteps had died away, all was silent.

The food was taken by Pierre, who placed his straw-plaiting aside with a sigh, ere he broke the bread, and passed one-half of it across to Rivière, who heeded him not.

After awhile, Pierre took the great water jug, and raised it to his lips; but recollecting himself, he, with all a Frenchman's politeness, lowered the vessel without tasting the contents.

"Drink, mon ami," he said, passing it to Rivière; but the latter motioned him away, and muttering something about fatigue, threw himself back upon his pallet, and turned his face to the wall.

Pierre sat munching his bread slowly, with his face turned towards the shadowy corner where his fellow-prisoner lay. He ate slowly, moistening his poor fare again and again with water from the jug—the light growing fainter and more faint. At times he softly shook his head and muttered a few words—then, too, he would sigh; but, none the less, he applied himself diligently to his repast, picking the crumbs delicately, pausing over

choice scraps of crust—for it was his dinner, and, meagre as was the food, it was eaten with a relish to the last crumb.

Darkness at last, and then Pierre turned to his couch.

"Bon soir, mon ami," he said.

There was no reply. Rivière seemed to be sleeping heavily, and soon the occasional tramp, tramp of the sentry outside was all that broke the stillness of the night.

CHAPTER V.

THE SWORD WEARS THE SCABBARD.

IT must have been about midnight that Rivière rose from his couch. No sooner had Pierre's lightly drawn and regular breathing told that he slept, than his fellow-captive had softly raised himself, to sit with his head leaning against the stone wall. The big drops of sweat—begotten by the agony of his spirit—stood upon his forehead. His countenance was drawn and ghastly, and he drew his breath from time to time with a sharp, cutting sob.

It was his hour for going over the past, and he was reviewing once more the scene of the attempted assassination of the King, the dénouement, and the long, tedious trial. But soon came other thoughts, such as made his eyes grow hot and seem to burn him; for to his old recollections was added the fruitage of the suggestion uttered by Pierre.

That was a bitter seed, and it had fallen in ground long prepared for its reception. It burst its envelope, shot forth, and grew hugely, as its recipient ran over in his mind the motives that might have moved his friend and wife.

Let him see! Why, yes, his friend's evidence must have been all false and villainous—that of his wife simple and truthful. For what had she said? To be sure—yes—that her husband was mechanical, spending many hours in his little atelier performing experiments.

Oh, damning evidence!—all serving to prove him guilty before those who sought for the makers of that infernal machine whose mission was to destroy the life of the King, and which had, in Rivière's presence, been hurled at the passing carriage.

And now it was midnight; and barefooted the prisoner paced his cell, maddened almost by the rush of thought. At times he paused, feeling ready to dash his head against the cruel walls which closed him

in; and a bitter smile crossed his lip as he thought of their impotence if he liked to set himself free.

Then he started, for a hand was laid upon his arm.

"Of what are you thinking?"

"Of death!"

Question and answer seemed to fall heavily upon the ears of the speakers, and Pierre shivered as he held fast by his companion's arm.

"It will come but too soon," he said at length. "Let us wait, and first see those we love."

He led Rivière towards the straw bed; and then, seeing him throw himself wearily upon it, he stood gazing at the indistinct form.

"You would not be so mad," he said.

But there was no response; and after a time he turned, cold and shuddering, to his own couch.

"I will watch him," he said to himself; and he supported himself upon his arm, gazing intently in the direction of his fellow-prisoner's bed, and trying to pierce the darkness. Now he almost succeeded in defining the figure upon the straw pallet; but soon it seemed to fade away gradually into obscurity, and then again to loom up large and ominous.

Suppose he should attempt his life! How horrible to be present, shut up there till morning! Tchut! it was absurd. Over-excitement and—and—no, not morning yet. He would watch, though—and—

Pierre was sleeping soundly, in spite of dread and trouble; and Rivière was again seated upon his bed's edge, sleepless, and wandering in a maze of doubt, chasing two phantoms—those of his fair young wife, and the friend so trusted and aided by his purse.

Doubt? He had not had a single suspicion till now. But now! caged here, and Marie exposed to the machinations of a villain—it was horrible! But was she innocent?

A thousand simple acts now grew distorted, and clothed in a garb of suspicion. Wild thoughts assailed his brain, and clenching his hands, and glaring with bloodshot eyes into the darkness, he sat panting, gasping for breath.

He threw himself upon the pallet and closed his eyes, but no sleep came. Thoughts still pressed upon him in a confused crowd. But towards morning came

a fitful slumber, during which wild dreams chased one another through his brain. He was free. His wife was smiling upon him, and he was pressing forward to clasp her to his breast; when Lemaire dashed him to the ground, pressed his heel upon him, and forced him down—down—lower and lower—into his cell, where he held him, till, by a mighty effort, he threw him off, and then seized him by the throat with a cry of rage.

"The matter? No—nothing. I was dreaming."

Rivière was sitting up, every nerve throbbing with excitement as he spoke, and his hand stole to his face, to find it streaming with perspiration.

"It is nothing. Go to sleep. It is hot and insufferable. I can hardly breathe."

Pierre, who had been awakened by his companion's cry, lay down once more, trying to watch, but ever baffled by the obscurity. He could make out the grated window—just faintly seen—but now that was all. He would not sleep, though, again—of that he was determined; and in the morning he would tell their gaoler to watch, for Rivière was not to be trusted. Should he ask to be separated from him? No. That would be worse. But suppose anything should happen? How dreadful! Here, though, was the sword wearing out its scabbard; and, unless a change came, it was within the bounds of probability that they would be separated by the cold, grim hand of which he—young and hopeful still—could not think without a shudder.

Rivière was now quiet—sleeping, evidently. Poor fellow, how he suffered! And it was evident that by the words spoken to-day a fresh wound had been opened.

The dawn at last. There was his fellow-prisoner's figure, just a little less indistinct, and Pierre gave a sigh of relief, for the day seemed to come with a watchful eye to ward off peril; and, worn out with his disturbed night, the young man dropped off fast asleep once more.

He must have slept for hours, for there was that light in the cell which showed that the sun was shining somewhere, when he awoke with a start of horror, to leap from his bed, and seize Rivière by the arm.

Another minute and he would have been too late.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AT A VEGETABLE JEWEL MART.

"COVENT GARDEN, m'm?—yes, m'm."

John mounts to the side of Thomas, and the barouche is driven from W. to W.C.; for it is a fashionable thing to "do" the market occasionally, and come back loaded with sweets in the shape of flowers, and savouries in the form of vegetables. It is a nice place, Covent Garden Market, and the central avenue is a very satisfactory walk for studying human and vegetable nature; but this morning we will go, early, to a market where the vehicles waiting are not the masterpieces of Laurie, Kesterton, or Peters, but your genuine "donnerkey-go-fasters"—your long, shallow tray barrows of the kind supplied to that costers' barrow club of which Lord Shaftesbury is a member, though whether his lordship has yet exercised his rights, and paid in for and obtained his barrow, we do not know.

By the way, what colour would he choose? One of these blues picked out with red, or one of these greens with a line of "yaller"? Anyhow, it may be taken for granted that the donkey would have less string about its harness than is displayed here, over the shaggy coat of many a long-eared quadruped, standing in a rank, very meditative of aspect, and extremely nervous, apparently, about its tail, which it tucks carefully from sight between its legs.

This is Farringdon Market, the successor of the old market of the Fleet, once of goodly size, but now sadly curtailed by the large slice taken off its upper or western side for the making of the new street from Holborn to Ludgate-circus. There is no fashion here, no "lardy-dardy" swell purchasing a flower for his button-hole, or a lace-paper bouquet for the lady he is to escort to the night's opera. Decent clothes are rather objected to here—they excite notice as being foreign and in the way; for here we mean business, and the word promenade has probably never entered the iron railings. Asparagus here is not of the thickest and stubbiest sticks, and is spoken of and labelled as "grass;" while watercress, seen but sparingly at Covent Garden, can here be found in dark, bronzey-green stacks. "Creases" we call them here, and fresh and crisp they are—fresh from the watery beds down by the Great Eastern Railway.

It is no use to mind a little shouldering and pushing about if you come here, for so early in the morning people are thoroughly in earnest; and these corduroy-breeched men, who wear sleeved "weskets," and a vast display of pearl buttons, are very intent as they examine heaps, stacks, and beds, before parting with their silver and copper, generally carried by the "missus" deep down in the cavernous depths of a great pocket, far away from the reach of pilfering hand.

Here is one with summer cabbage on his mind, critically poking about among "barges," as they are called—great, tall baskets, crammed to repletion; and he is reckoning up how to get the biggest, best, and most fresh, piled up high upon his donkey barrow, for the smallest amount of currency. A curious problem this, when the seller is working from a precisely opposite standpoint.

Our friend—Joe his name is, for we heard him so addressed by his "missus"—has at last evidently fastened upon the very cabbages he wants—these are the fellows just lifted down from the great blue waggon, bearing a well-known grower's name in gold on a scarlet band—and consequently he begins to act like an old carp in a fish-pond: approaching the bait, retiring, circling round it, and evidently suspecting a hook therein; but tempted all the same. At last friend Joe is driven to extremities, for a mate in the same way of business has evidently cabbages in his eye also; and, if Joe do not buy, Dick probably will; so Joe opens fire at once, and, in a highly disparaging tone, asks the salesman if he "calls them cabbages."

Salesman says he does, and advises Joe, if he means to buy, to do so at once, for they'll soon be gone.

Joe responds that, of all the poor, beggarly-looking things "as ever he see, these here is about the worst. Buy 'em? Not he. He knows too well the wally of things. There's some over t'other side worth two on 'em. He wouldn't mind giving so much for the lot, and that's overdoin' it—heaps. No, he won't buy; but he'll come back and take the lot when the market's about over, and they're all left on the salesman's hands unsold. That's about his little game."

Is it? Five minutes after, he has brought the "missus" up with the money, and they *shoot* in, so to speak, just in time, for Dick is coming up with his "missus;" and Joe

chuckles and grins as they pay the money asked, and begin to load up—in other words, busily transfer the summer cabbages to the barrow, which soon sinks down upon its springs, and all to the great disgust of Dick, who gives it as his opinion that "they're the wust lot in the 'ole market."

A few steps farther on, and another coster is buying flowers—market bunches of the common varieties—odorous, beautiful, and fresh dripping with moisture, and only cut last evening in one of the suburban market gardens, where economy of space has caused them to be planted in rows, and tufts, and beds, in places not available for other crops. Here, close by, too, are the heaps from which the market girls purchase their stocks. Choicer flowers these; and if you watch this earnest-eyed damsel, you will see her, with her little store, all in coppers, purchase a bunch of scarlet geranium; another of *calceolaria*; a bunch of rosebuds, another of moss roses. She is not content yet, but buys a bundle of green leaves, some maiden-hair fern, and begs half a handful of matting—that peculiarly scented bark, in thin strips, so regularly used for tying.

We need not stay to see the costermongers purchasing their new potatoes, their barges of peas, most likely from the Essex "fields"—Bardfield, Finchingfield, and their neighbours, where they are grown in patches many acres wide. Gooseberries, too, have their many admirers, both the green for cooking, and the early ripeners for the stall trade. These are being bought, in company with cherries that might be riper than they are without prejudice to the eater. But it is a race amongst the growers who can get first fruits to the market, when they command the highest price.

Strawberries these—baskets and baskets, carefully picked, packed, and tied. They came out of those light spring vans, that look like long cages upon wheels. They are being bought up fast, for the rich, melting fruit finds a ready sale. But what has become of the favourite old pottles of our early days—those attenuated pieces of wicker deception that used accidentally to have a few green leaves halfway down, beneath which strawberries were not? They seem to have given way universally to the chip baskets, here called "punnets," and certainly the berries get less bruised.

Another flower bed. What a picture! If it were not for its ephemeral nature, one

might be tempted to wish the market were carried on in our back garden, so bright is the scene. But its hours are very brief, for fast almost as these pot flowers are unladen from the vans, they find purchasers, who go off, hugging five, six, and seven pots to their eager bosoms on the way to the donkey and the tray. Choice, too, these plants look;—well, they were choice a few years since, and perhaps are finer now; but when any variety of geranium or fuchsia has been the run for a year or two, it has to give way to a newer sort; and the old, beautiful as ever, comes down from the great nurseries to those which supply the markets, and, grown in quantity, is bought by the costers, and comes within the reach of the humblest home.

So much the better. Why, any casual observer may see in a short time barrows and barrows full of flowers, erst the occupants of the conservatories of the wealthy, now being bawled about the streets at from sixpence to eighteenpence per pot, according to the postal district where they are sold. For coster Joe's ideas about profit are very elastic, and for the potted geranium for which he gave threepence, fourpence, or fivepence, he will sometimes get as much as—

"Now, I calls that 'ere shabby, guvnor. Yer comes in here a casual hobservin', and we lets yer into all the sax of the trade, and then yer goes and blows on it all. Why, look'ee here how we goes miles and miles sometimes to sell a pot, and then don't sell it. Look at the prices as thinks is, and the missus to keep, and the kids, let alone the blessed moke! Wy, what with stable and grub, that there blessed think costies more to keep than a Christian. 'Taint as if you was doin' in vegetables: then you can feed the warmint on pea shucks, and cabbage leaves, and old stuff as won't sell; but even a jackass won't eat broken flower pots and syle."

Well, Joe, we won't tell. Get what profit you can, so that it be honest; and even then you will never come up to the streets of Regent or of Bond.

But here are bedding plants for late gardeners, or to take the places of others going off: egg chests and orange boxes full, with names as sharp as thorns. Why, here is our old friend the pansy coming more and more into fashion—late-blossoming kinds, all velvet and diamond in their jewelled petals. Potless all these, but with the soil in which

they grew pressed in a ball about their roots; and rapidly they are bought up, to go east, west, north, and south, for garden, yard, and window—bright now, with their country freshness on them, though it will soon pass away. It is so, too, with the potted flowers. For the most part, they are kept in shelter in their native nursery until they arrive at their greatest pitch of perfection—full of blossom—and then come up for sale.

"How much better it would be if they were brought up only in beds," we observe to a salesman.

"Better for the buyers, p'raps," he says, gruffly; "but they wouldn't sell so well."

He is probably right; and so the flower trade goes on, we poor buyers taking them when they are trained to their highest pitch, one from which they must soon fall in dishevelled blossoms, leaving us only yellow, withering leaves instead of growing plants, whose blossoms would be coming on in rapid succession.

"To transplant a shrub," says somebody somewhere, "take it up carefully, with plenty of earth; and if potting it, shake more than press the fresh soil round the tender fibres, lest you break them off, and the plant bleed sap to its weakening." We think of this as we see a coster buy a lot of those charming little evergreens of the arbor vitæ class—toy shrubs, which look so elegant in our windows. They have been brought up in boxes by the nurseryman, fresh from the plantation; but our coster, to do a trade, must sell them in pots—a new habitation for them.

There he is, busy at work so as to lose no time. He has bought a few dozen new red pots, and is busy planting his purchases, ramming them tightly in with the soil he has obtained, getting them well upright too; and, when well watered to settle the earth, and ranged in his barrow, the little potted plantation looks charming, and he will go and drive a brisk trade with his barrow, and at a good profit.

But, alas for the buyer! It never strikes him or her, most probably the latter—no disrespect intended—that those charming little shrubs were not grown in, and have not become habituated to, the pots; and they are purchased just as they are, with the result that not one in six will survive for six months unless repotted according to law.

The buying and selling go briskly, for all here mean business. More flower-selling here—girls these, too, storing their baskets,

and busy-fingered, making up tiny button-hole bouquets with leaf and wire. How this flower-selling trade has grown up of late years in town! God speed it; for we want the floral jewels badly enough as a contrast for the eye to rest upon. But two or three lustres since, and in the streets the sales were limited to bunches of wallflowers and violets, with lavender later on. The button-hole flower was a rarity, and looked upon with something bordering upon contempt. Now, if I liked to plunge into those painful things, statistics, I could show how many thousands earn their bread by the growth and sale of nature's sweets. Take a run out any day in any direction, and see the battle going on in the suburbs between that coral insect of humanity, the builder, and the market gardener, with his acres of flowers and other produce for great London. One's sympathies go with the gardener, and it is with a feeling akin to sorrow that one sees stuccoed streets and squares trying to flourish where, but a year or so since, grew beds of floral gems in the highest state of perfection.

"Mind your 'at, guvnor," says a husky voice as it is knocked over our eyes; and as we turn angrily, it is to see friend coster go off, laden with dancing wallflowers in a shallow chest, each blossom aiding to produce a carillon—a musical peal whose sound is scent, if so Hibernian a simile can be allowed; and so, brushing the nap of our ill-used chimney-pot, we hasten out of the gates to answer a new appeal—one that will take no denial. It was forgotten for the moment as we mused about the builders' encroachments; but now it comes on strong, for we have been three hours here in Farringdon at early morn, and it is time to break our fast.

A CURIOUS CASE.

IN that quiet time of year when none of the dangerous and treacherous little storms so frequent in the Mediterranean—known to sailors by the name of white squalls—disturb the tranquil serenity of its deep blue waters; when by day the warm and brilliant rays of the sun make the crest of every little ripple glitter and sparkle, till the surface of the sea resembles a dewy meadow at sunrise; and when at night the moon always rises clearly and brilliantly into a deep blue expanse of cloudless sky,

studded with myriads of stars that shine with a softer and purer radiance than they ever do when seen through the foggy, misty atmosphere of our beloved England.

It was at such a time, and on such a night as this, somewhere between Beyrout and Malta, that the noble frigate *Aster* was cleaving her way through the dark waters—so quietly and smoothly that, but for the phosphorescent line of light which she left in her wake, and the ripples of brilliant foam which she scornfully dashed, with a murmur as of protest at their unwonted disturbance, from her shapely bow, could an observer have been near her, he might have thought he gazed on some beauteous vision of a ship, with all her bellying sails gleaming white in the moonlight against a dark background of sky, instead of a solid reality of oak and canvas, freighted with living men.

Captain Richard Montague had left his orders for the night, and had turned in some hours before. The middle watch had been mustered, and were stretched about the deck, amongst the ropes, and between the guns, seeking such repose as the hard planks afforded their weary limbs—lulled to sleep by the almost imperceptible motion of the ship, and the soft, cool breeze, which was just sufficient to fill the swelling sails. Lieutenant Jones, the officer of the watch, was pacing up and down the quarter-deck, keeping a watchful eye on the sails and the helmsman, his hands buried deep in the pockets of his loose, easy-fitting monkey jacket, and whistling softly to himself, "Home, sweet home." For myself, I was listlessly swinging my legs on the capstan, in a peaceful and contented frame of mind, drinking in the placid beauty of the star-spangled sky, and letting my thoughts idly roam away to my far-off English home, in which direction they were probably carried by the soft, low whistling of the lieutenant.

A tinkling sound was suddenly heard from below, and Mr. Jones stopped in his walk and his whistling to listen.

"The captain's bell, sir," said I, jumping off the capstan.

And so it was, as the sentry informed us in due time, with the additional information that I, the midshipman of the watch, was wanted in his cabin. So down I went, wondering not a little what he could possibly want.

Now, Captain Richard Montague, who was in command of her Britannic Majesty's ship

Aster, was not a crotchety or fidgety man; nor had he any of those bullying propensities that, alas! too many of our otherwise inestimable captains notoriously evince. He was a kind, courteous, gentlemanly man, firm, and straightforward; very different from the old school of blustering, swearing, rough and ready old sea-dogs that every reader of Marryat's wonderful stories is inclined to associate with the idea of a "navy captain." He was one who maintained strict discipline in his ship, without the exercise of any undue severity. On shore he was jovial and affable to all, a keen sportsman, and an enthusiastic promoter of athletic sports, shooting matches, dramatic performances, and games for the amusement of his men—inciting both officers and men to a wholesome rivalry in such diversions, at all of which he himself was an adept. He was a man habitually cool and courageous in time of trouble and danger, and had won honours and distinctions for personal gallantry from a grateful country.

But when I went into his cabin on this particular night, he was not himself. Something appeared to have shaken the equilibrium of his habitually steady intellect, and I knew that it must be an affair of great importance, for his hand shook as he beckoned me to come closer, and he was looking pale and agitated in the extreme.

He was in his dressing-gown, sitting by a table on which a light was burning, and beside him was placed a glass of strong brandy and water.

He seemed about to communicate something; but, after some hesitation, appeared to change his mind, and asked abruptly if I went the rounds of the ship below regularly during my watch, according to his orders.

I replied that I did.

"That's right," he said, apparently a little relieved. And then, after a pause, he asked me, with considerable earnestness of tone and manner, if I had done so in that watch.

And, as he asked, he looked eagerly into my eyes as if to make sure that I was not deceiving him.

I answered that I had, most strictly and conscientiously.

He then asked me several other questions of a similar nature, to all of which I suppose I returned satisfactory answers, for he seemed much relieved, and dismissed me with a short laugh, and a pleasant "Good night.

Thank you." And before I shut his door I heard him mutter, "Pshaw! folly!" and laugh again.

To say that I was surprised by this extraordinary and unusual conduct on the part of Captain Montague would not express half what I felt. There was much in the agitated manner of such a man to excite apprehension; for I knew him sufficiently well to be sure that he would not be frightened by a fancy. He was a sensible, well-educated man; and I had heard him sometimes, when the conversation had happened to turn on such subjects, ridiculing in an unassumed manner the foolish superstitions of the ignorant and timid. I could not think that he was suffering from nightmare, brought on by indigestion, for he was always exceedingly temperate. He had not been entertaining that evening, and he was in good health. Besides, I felt sure that he would himself have attributed such a thing, had it been the case, to its true cause; and the more I thought of it, the more convinced I became that there must be something of a serious and practical nature to have such a powerful effect on a man possessed of such a healthy nervous organization.

I was not, however, so much alarmed as curious. There arose in me a determination to solve the mystery—to discover if there really was anything wrong in the ship, and what it was. Conjecture on conjecture flitted through my puzzled brain, all equally wild and unreasonable. I had no clue to work on; but still I felt a burning desire to find out the meaning of it. So, briefly telling Lieutenant Jones that the captain had been talking about the rounds, and that I thought I had better go over the vessel again, I started off on my voyage of discovery, with a corporal and two lanterns, in quest of I knew not what.

I felt as if on the eve of some wonderful discovery as I began to go along the decks, peering with my lantern into the dark shade between the guns, through the men's messes, and into every dark hole or corner large enough to conceal a rat; but nothing rewarded my search. A large cat jumped out from under the muzzle of a gun, and startled me once; but that was all. Everything was quiet: only the heavy breathing of the watch below disturbed the stillness of the night between decks.

Down I went into the lower depths of the ship, thinking to myself that now I should

know what it was. Here or nowhere must be concealed—what? I didn't know, but I thought that I must find something; but no, nothing rewarded my toil. I looked everywhere. I turned over everything, peered into the water tanks, tried the store-room doors, crept into dusty recesses that, perhaps, no one had ever thought of trying to get into before since the ship was built; but the only result was, as might have been expected, to send a score or two of rats scampering in alarm over the deck, and get myself covered all over with dust and white-wash. So at last I had to give it up, hot and tired with my search, and just as wise as when I started.

Lieutenant Jones was clearly in a bad temper when I returned on deck.

"Where have you been all this time?" he demanded.

"Going the rounds, sir," I replied.

Mr. Jones, however, would not believe I had taken so long to perform this duty, and made some unpleasant remarks about "skulking."

The fact of the matter was, that during my absence it had suddenly struck him that he was very thirsty, and that he would be the better for a glass of grog. Now, there was a bottle of rum in his cabin, also a tumbler and water. He was very fond of rum and water; but duty forbade his going to get it. He did not dare send one of the men into his cabin; and, as I was the only other person he could send, it is scarcely to be wondered at that he should have become more and more incensed with me as the time wore on and his thirst increased. As soon as I saw how things were, I came to the obvious conclusion that the best method of appeasing his wrath was to quench his thirst. I went down to his cabin as quickly as I could, and mixed him a glass of extra strength to compensate him for the delay.

I was hurrying on deck with it, when, just as I reached the top of the hatchway, I saw what arrested my footsteps, and rooted me to the spot in amazement.

The captain had come up the after-ladder, which was close to his cabin door, and was advancing quickly forward—a bright streak of moonlight, from which I was shaded by the sails, throwing a light as strong almost as day over and around him. His coat was open, as if thrown hurriedly on, his feet were slipped, his cap was pushed back on his head, exposing to view

a face on which the signs of horror were strongly marked, eyes starting forward and bloodshot, lips apart and quivering, and cheeks the pallor of which appeared quite ghastly in the cold blue moonlight.

He evidently did not observe me—though I could see him sufficiently well to note every detail of his appearance—but, with hurried footsteps, made straight for the officer of the watch, who was standing on the end of the bridge, with his back turned to him, trying to make out a light that had been reported on the weather bow.

As soon as I recovered from the shock his wild and extraordinary appearance had given me, I went back to Mr. Jones's cabin, and put down the glass of grog—for it was out of the question that an officer of the watch should take such a thing when the captain was on deck—and came up again at once.

"Quick, the carpenter!—quick!" I heard the captain shout as I came up the ladder, and his voice was strangely agitated.

"What can be the matter? One would think the ship was sinking. She must have sprung a bad leak in his cabin," I thought.

"Quick—the carpenter! Send for him!" he shouted again, catching sight of me.

And I sent two men after the two or three who had already gone in search of that officer.

Presently the carpenter came up, rather astonished, as may be supposed, by such an unusual and hurried summons, and not a little alarmed.

"What is the matter, sir?" he whispered as he passed me.

"I'm sure I don't know," I replied; "but make haste. The captain's in a dreadful way about something or other."

The bell struck four times, signifying that it was two o'clock. The captain started at the sound, and again called for the carpenter.

"Coming, sir," replied Mr. James, as he sprang on the bridge.

"Bring that case on deck," said the captain.

"What case, sir?" said Mr. James.

"In the foremost locker, the starboard side of your store-room, is a case, marked 'Ward-room Officers.' Bring it on deck, quick."

There was no disobeying this peremptory order—there was no questioning it; but it was a very odd one to give. What could

the captain want with a case, the property of the ward-room officers, in the first place? and, in the second, how came he to find out, in the middle of the night, that it was there, in a place where it certainly had no right to be? and, then, why was it there at all, and not in the proper store-room? It was strange, too, most of all, that a case of ward-room stores could have agitated the captain in the way it appeared to have done, and have actually brought him on deck in the middle of the night, for no other purpose seemingly than to send down for it. Why could he not have waited till the morning, at least, if he was determined to have it brought up? What could it contain? That was the puzzling question I could not settle; and the carpenter could give me no information.

"I don't know what it is," he said. "It came on board just before we left Beyrout. The captain was out of the ship at the time, I remember, and the paymaster asked me to stow it away in my store-room, as they had filled theirs up. I thought it was only pickles or jam; but we shall soon see what's in it."

The case came on deck, and some men accompanied it, with tools for forcing it open. I drew the captain's attention to them, for he was looking the other way. He turned round, and looked at the box, and said—

"Yes, that's it. Now, two men take it up very carefully—don't let it fall, mind!—and bring it up here on the bridge."

His voice was rather husky; but he seemed to have regained his composure, though his face was still very pale.

There was nothing peculiar outwardly about the case in which so much interest was centred.

It was about three feet long, by a foot and a half wide and deep, made of common deal, roughly put together, and with a narrow iron band round each end. The name of some dealer at Beyrout was stamped on it in black letters, but so much defaced as to be almost illegible. Underneath that was printed, "Ward-room Officers, H.M.S. *Aster*." Outwardly, it was nothing. What could it contain?

"Now," said the captain, when the two men were beside him, "give it a good swing, and launch it overboard. One, two, three, and over!"

A dull splash—the mysterious case was gone!

Down, down, through many fathoms of blue water it sank, and with it carried a secret of such dread import that it had blanched the cheek and palsied the hand of a man accustomed to the perils of the sea from his youth, and who, in the most crucial moments of danger, had never before shown to those around him that the sensation of fear was known to him.

Down, down it sank, the waters closed over it, the mighty sea took it to herself, for ever hiding it from the sight of men. The clear, bright moon shone on the place; the bubbles that marked the spot burst and melted away. The restless ocean showed no trace of the place where the mysterious box was engulfed; but the ripples danced to and fro in the moonbeams, as they had danced before, and the ship glided silently and swiftly away.

I was sorely disappointed. I thought, of course, when the case was ordered to be brought on deck, that it would be opened before the captain's eyes, and I should be made acquainted with the reason of his unusual excitement.

The old carpenter stared aghast.

"Good Lord!" he ejaculated, "what have come over him? Depend upon it, he's seen a ghost."

And he wiped the perspiration from his brow, for he was a superstitious old man.

"Ghost! What's a ghost got to do with a box of pickles?" sneered old Tom Raffles, the boatswain's mate—a privileged oddity. "It's my opinion he's gone stark, staring mad."

"Them things in that 'ere box weren't his'n to chuck overboard. He'll be a chuckin' my bag over next," grumbled another man—a discontented and insubordinate character.

I moved away. The conversation was not meant for my ears, and I had no wish to play the eavesdropper.

Full an hour did Captain Montague pace up and down the deck with the officer of the watch; and for that space of time I had to curb my impatience to hear the story which I knew he would have to tell me, and for the same length of time had the thirsty lieutenant to wait for his glass of grog; but when at last the captain did again seek his cabin, I lost no time in bringing him up the long-delayed refreshment, and, whilst drinking it, he detailed to me the following particulars.

Captain Montague had turned in as usual after giving his orders for the night to the officer of the first watch, and having nothing to disturb him, and being in good health, he was soon fast asleep. How long he slept he did not know; but suddenly he heard a loud cry of "Fire!" Only half awakened, and not sure whether the voice was in his cabin or outside, he started up, and involuntarily said—

"Where?"

To which question he distinctly heard a voice in *his cabin* answer—

"A case of inflammables in the foremost locker, starboard side of the carpenter's store-room, marked 'Ward-room Officers,' has ignited."

Just then the bell struck four times. He sprang out of bed, and searched for the owner of the voice; but no one was there. Then he rang his bell, and summoned the sentry outside, and questioned him as to who had come into his cabin; but the sentry—a reliable man—was certain that nobody had passed his post. The time, too, was close on eight bells. So, satisfied that he must have been dreaming, and rather ashamed of having agitated himself about nothing, he dismissed the sentry, and proceeded to turn in once more; but he could not succeed in quite dismissing the subject from his mind, and when he at last fell asleep again, he was visited with this fearful dream:—

The vessel was the victim of that most awful catastrophe that can happen to a ship at sea—she was in flames. He was on deck, amidst a scene of confusion and horror perfectly indescribable, enveloped in hot and choking smoke, through which the lurid glare of the angry flames cast a dingy red light on the forms of dead and choking men; while on all sides the shrieks of anguish and despair, wrung from the scorched and drowning sailors, mingled with the roar of the flames and the splashing and hissing of the burning fragments of the vessel, as they separated themselves from her hull, and fell into the water.

He woke. Everything was quiet and peaceful. The moon was shining brightly through the port, and the steady tramp of the sentry keeping time to the ticking of his clock was the only sound to be heard.

Having steadied his nerves with a glass of brandy and water, and trying to dismiss the terrible recollection of his hideous dream

from his mind, he again fell asleep; but only to suffer a repetition of the horrible nightmare.

This time he sent for me on waking, and excited my curiosity and apprehension, as I have related, by his agitated manner; but still my assurance of the safety of the vessel was insufficient to banish the vision.

A third time he imagined himself in the burning ship: again he was a spectator of all the horrors of the conflagration; again was he standing amid that fearful scene of confusion and death, with all its dread reality intensified; again he saw hundreds of his own men dying fearful deaths around him, without being able to render the least assistance, while the hot flames darted their forked tongues at him; and again, as the dense suffocating smoke closed around him, did he find himself the victim of mad despair. Again, too, he woke to find it but a dream, and all still and quiet as before.

He could bear it no longer; the vision was too palpable—too awful. He thought of the mysterious voice. Could it be a supernatural warning? He did not believe in such things; but then he dared not risk a repetition of the dream. So he rushed on deck, and sent for the case, of the existence of which he had no positive certainty until it was brought up, which wonderful corroboration of what he had just heard convinced him at once of its dangerous character, and induced him to order it to be immediately thrown overboard.

Such was the story that Mr. Jones related to me. How much of it originated in his own brain, aided by the glass of grog, I cannot say; but all that I had remarked in the captain's behaviour was singularly corroborative of his tale. I will therefore leave the reader to form his own conclusions, and account for this "curious case," if he can; only remarking, by the way, that it was afterwards ascertained to have been filled with some tins of a dangerously inflammable oil for burning in the ward-room lamps.

THE CARTRIDGE PAPERS.

BY AN OLD SOLDIER.

LIFE IN A DRAGOON REGIMENT.

ON a fine day at the latter end of June, in 1839, I found myself in Charles-street, Westminster, and took a shilling to serve her most gracious Majesty Queen

Victoria, in the —th Regiment of Heavy Dragoons. On the strength of a superfine coat—not quite so common an affair as in the present days of cheap clothing—and having some silver in my pocket, I took my ale in the parlour, amongst the recruiting sergeants, representatives of at least a dozen cavalry regiments being there at that time. On one of the three evenings I spent there before joining my regiment, we had the honour of a visit after sunset from three of the Life Guards in full dress, they being then on duty at the Horse Guards; and I was introduced to them as having seen real service in Spain, whence I had returned a short time before, after serving for some time in the Anglo-Spanish Legion. There were few regiments at that time that could boast of having smelt powder, and the Waterloo medal was the only one seen on a soldier's breast. I must confess that I at first felt rather small amongst those showy-looking fellows, until one of them tried to trot me out, when I, nothing loath, gave them a few anecdotes more amusing than truthful.

"Were there any of your fellows as big as me?" said one stalwart giant, standing up.

"Oh, yes," said I; "we had one, Cramer by name, six foot seven; and our colonel, adjutant, and sergeant-major, were all six foot four men."

I am afraid I elevated our staff a little, though our colonel, adjutant, and sergeant-major were all fine men, above six foot; but I was a little elevated myself just then, and that must be my excuse.

As I am about to give a truthful account of the regiment in which I had enlisted, during the eighteen months I was in it, and as it is very much altered now, I shall not consider it necessary to give the number, but merely say that it was a regiment having no history in the British army. No brilliant victories were named on its banners; no war-cry was familiar to the mouths of its men; from the time of Queen Anne down to the time of my joining it, all had been a blank. It was sent to France after Waterloo, as part of the Army of Occupation, and came back, I believe, in 1820; and I used to look with respect at an old lance-sergeant—the last of the Mohicans—who had actually been in France with the regiment.

The officers were almost all men of property, with baronets and honourables, the real command being in the hands of the

adjutant, who had risen from the ranks many years before. Twenty years as adjutant had made him almost perfect. His constant aim was to make the regiment famous for something, and famed it was for discipline and cleanliness. No regiment in Phoenix Park went through every movement with such correctness, steadiness, and celerity. Our sword drill was a marvellous piece of work, more like mechanism than manual movements—every one of the hundreds of swordstinkling exactly at the same moment, as though moved by wires.

Our adjutant was in his glory when he had us collected on the sands of a watering place, with carriage loads of spectators. After some movements in line, the trumpet would sound "disperse," and in an instant the whole regiment would become an apparently disorganized mob of mounted men, galloping wildly about on the sea sands. Another sound of the trumpet, and all would instantly return, forming in their places on the markers; and the regiment would be advancing or retiring, with skirmishers on the flanks, before the spectators could well believe their eyes. This was, no doubt, very satisfactory to the lookers-on; but to the men—who turned out in the morning with their scabbards and all the other iron-work of their arms and appointments as bright as looking-glass, which, on their return, would be covered with a yellow rust from the salt sand—it was anything but sport.

Brightness was a speciality for which the regiment was famous, and was insisted on by the adjutant, and enforced by the non-commissioned officers, until the brain grew dull as the helmet above it grew bright; and it was not uncommon—and happened on an average once a twelvemonth—that a man, strong in bodily health, went into the stable, and, with his pistol, blew out his brains.

One of the necessities served out with each kit was a burnisher, and with this all the iron-work was to be burnished, even down to the tongues of the buckles; and the helmet, shoulder scales, and other brass-work had to shine in accordance. A large bowl of pipe-clay—furnished by our milkman, as compensation for our potato peelings, which went to feed his pigs—was always mixed and common in the room; and in winter we pipe-clayed our gloves on our hands, because they dried quickly, and so froze our fingers; while in summer we daubed our white trousers

thickly and had them on before they were half dry for the same reason, some of the elder soldiers suffering from rheumatism in consequence.

Everything was sacrificed not to real, but to apparent cleanliness; and before you were considered clean enough to be let out of the barrack gates, you must of necessity be almost as dirty as a bricklayer's labourer. In each barrack-room were seven single and one married man; who might be private, corporal, or lance-sergeant. With or without children, all under the rank of sergeant lived in a room common to seven single men, screened from them at night by curtains, or otherwise—not according to the necessities of the case, but according to the finances of the married man, who had in some cases little else than his pay.

There was a school for the children, and I believe a library; but, although fond of reading, I never had time, during the eighteen months I was in the regiment, even to consult the catalogue of books. Indeed, the burnishing and polishing—so fully occupied us recruits, that we had barely time to eat our breakfast; although the table was never loaded to superabundance at that meal.

At half-past five in the morning the reveillé sounded, and we rose and made our beds; and were then busy in the stable until eight, or if foragers or on stable guard were fully occupied until half-past, when we had to be at the breakfast table. At nine we were paraded in watering order, and inspected, mounted, by the officer of the day, and had a ride into the country some two or three miles; then back and to stables until dinner-time. In some regiments the rule was midday stables at noon; but with us it was not so. Whatever time we came back from watering order, that time until dinner was spent in the stables, the horses being sometimes brought out into the open air that the sergeants might be able more strictly to inspect their state of grooming; and we were only dismissed just in time to button up and sit down to dinner with our stocks on.

After dinner there was half an hour's leisure, and then preparation for parade on foot. When this was over, you could walk out for two hours; but the barrack, as a rule, is a long way from the town, and you had to be back for seven o'clock stables, seldom having any money to spend, and always

having something to do at home. Your carbine barrel was chafed last field-day, and must be browned with bluestone, beeswax, and crocus; or the ornamental frescoes on your helmet must be unscrewed and polished, your belts and gauntlets want pipe-claying; or you suspect a field-day to-morrow, and you will, if you are wise, stay at home and refold your cloak, and pack your valise. After which you would wonder if you had forgotten any of the multitude of things that were expected to come out bright and shining from a dirty stable next morning, and whether you would pass muster before all the twenty pairs of eyes—from the squad corporal up to the colonel—whose business it was to find a fault in your appearance.

On Saturdays there was no afternoon parade, but it was quite possible that you would be on fatigue duty, coal carrying. If not you were free from two o'clock until seven—unless you took this opportunity to prepare for the morrow's church parade.

On Sundays the men turned out at nine in full dress, and were inspected in squads by the sergeants, then in troops by the captains, and finally by the colonel; and then marched past, and to the riding school, where we stood at ease while the service was performed. Often, at a prolonged inspection, have big, strong men dropped down in faints, from being kept in a constrained position, with the carbine at port; while the colonel—who could not give the word of command on a field-day without a programme penned by the adjutant—was sauntering down the front, and up the rear, passing some without notice, and inspecting others from helmet to spur, followed by the captains and staff. During the whole of this inspection, each man in the ranks was expected to be as motionless as the ground he stood on; and he often had to listen to remarks behind his back—not only depreciatory to his personal appearance on that occasion, but also to his general behaviour in the regiment.

As soon as the prayers were concluded, we were marched back to the parade-ground, and dismissed to our rooms, where we laid out our kits, each on his own bed, and waited for the officers to come round, and inspect them. Kit inspection was an affair generally disliked by the men, and we always waited very impatiently for the officers, who came in a party seven or eight strong, so that there might be one to each kit, to

observe, as the quartermaster called the list, that each man pointed to the article called. For instance: "One mane comb and sponge." "Here!" and you laid your hand on the articles named; and if anything should be deficient, a court-martial was the result.

When this inspection was over it was past noon, and all hurried down into the stables—the horses were bedded down, and the centre of the stable cleanly swept; after which the saddle was dusted, and the finishing touch put to the bridle, which hung with the saddle at the back of each horse. At one o'clock the colonel was expected, and with him generally came a lot of gentry; and for some twenty minutes before this, every stable would be clattering like a field of tinkers—every one with his burnisher trying to outshine his comrade: his stirrups and bit ornamented and kept in form by a festoon of curb-chain, looking as bright as looking-glass, and as though never intended for use.

All was silence and order when the great folks came round, and gave due admiration. Sometimes the colonel would point out a horse who had tricks, vicious or otherwise; and once I myself had the honour (?) of being mentioned as an animal who had been in the Anglo-Spanish Legion.

As soon as this visit was paid, we might go to our rooms; but although the dinner was ready, it must not yet be eaten. We must wait until the orderly officer had come round, and had seen us sitting at the table, buttoned up, and with our stocks on, and had received the never-varying answer to his question of "Is all right?" When this ceremony was over, we might unbend and fall to; and afterwards, on this day only, we might make our beds down, if we chose, and go to sleep until seven o'clock, or walk out in full dress, with helmets on, having to come home for stables—leaving our sweet-hearts behind us to the care of the infantry, who had no stable duties to perform—and the watch-setting trumpets at nine o'clock finished the week.

Those who were not in debt had nine-pence a day to receive; it was, however, almost an impossibility for a cavalry soldier to be out of debt—at least, while a recruit—and the average pay was threepence per day. In addition to this, we had tea or coffee in the morning, and our meat baked or boiled for dinner, and, with a pound of bread, this was the ration for the day. The

so-called eight pounds of meat was cut into nine rations of about half a pound each—the ninth ration being given to the married woman, who kept the room clean for this privilege; and she would also supply any of us with a basin of tea in the afternoon, if we required it, for one penny, I have sometimes, while walking out in the afternoon, debated whether I should have tea or ale. This is a very serious affair, if you have but threepence in your pocket.

How I longed for my former filibustering life in Spain, where there was nothing of the regularity and respectability of my present life; where, if it was sometimes a famine, it was also sometimes a feast, compared to which our Christmas or Queen's birthday dinners here were very tame affairs indeed; and if I listened to our band in front of the officer's mess, playing "Love not," it would bring to my mind the guitars and castanets which had been familiar to me in very different scenes.

As may be expected, we were not a very happy lot of men. The colonel was old, gentlemanlike, and as I have above described him; the adjutant, quartermaster, and riding-master were a class as distinct from the rest of the officers as they were from the men. The adjutant, though not a tyrant himself, encouraged a strictness of discipline in the non-commissioned officers that made each a tyrant, whose tyranny was felt hourly, making the men uncomfortable and dissatisfied; and the consequences were drunkenness and suicide. No man actually killed himself while I was in the regiment—one had done so a few months before I joined—but one man shot his right hand off while I was there.

If a man was sentenced by court-martial to imprisonment for drunkenness, he was handcuffed on the parade, and then marched to the town gaol; and if flogged, it was on more than one occasion before prayers on a Sunday.

The hospital was always full, and the mortality amongst us—picked men in the prime of life—was in a much greater proportion than it should have been. My two years in Spain did not serve me here; and I had a tough job of it in the riding-school, until the riding-master took some interest in my lessons, and I was then soon dismissed drill. I am afraid I did not sufficiently respect the old soldiers; and laughed to scorn their old-fashioned ideas and theories of

soldiering, which they thought so much better than my practical knowledge.

Still, while I had anything to learn, I was very well satisfied. It was only after I was dismissed drill that I began to find out the discomforts of my situation; and after a little penitence, and a great many promises, I was purchased out, and returned home.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XIII.

"WE are utterly at cross-purposes," I gasped. "What is it you have been talking about, Mr. M'Lachlan?"

For I was determined that he should speak plainly, and then perhaps I might be able to give him a satisfactory answer—satisfactory, that is, to myself; for, after all, I could not see that I was very much to blame.

"What have we been talking about!" repeated Mr. M'Lachlan; "why, about the apparition of your father you saw some weeks ago."

Good gracious, what a climax! I was so immensely relieved, that, despite the seriousness of the subject, I smiled, much to Mr. M'Lachlan's disgust.

"You appear to treat the matter very lightly, Cochrane; but to me it is fraught with the deepest interest."

"I beg your pardon," I replied. "I am not laughing at the recollection of what I saw that night—far from it; but at the idea that, while you were talking about one thing, I was fully persuaded you meant another."

I thought he might possibly ask me what I had imagined he was anxious to know; and, had he done so, I had fully made up my mind to tell him all.

"Did you really see your father?" he asked, anxiously, and without noticing what I had said.

"I saw something that resembled him," I replied, "exactly as I had last seen him in Melbourne; and the conviction immediately forced itself upon me that he was dead."

"You believe, then, in the immortality of the soul? But of course you do."

"It is a question I do not care to speak about," I replied. "My ideas on the subject are peculiar, and were a source of

anxiety to my dear father. I make a point of not obtruding them upon others."

"But I beg you will treat me with more confidence," he answered, speaking very earnestly, and fixing me with his eyes—which were just like Robert's and Emma's. "The question, as I said before, possesses for me the very deepest interest. I come of a superstitious race, and flattered myself that I had shaken my mind free from its early trammels; but I found I was mistaken after I had heard of your adventure; for I knew, from the little I have seen and heard of you, that you were not a man likely to conjure up a drunken vision, and take it for a reality; and therefore that there must be some foundation. Have you received any further confirmation of your fears?"

"No," I replied, "there has not been time; but the Australian mail will be due in London to-morrow, and in a couple of days more I shall probably get a letter. But I have so little doubt of my loss, that I immediately went into mourning."

"So Robert told me; and that circumstance alone went far to assure me that you, at all events, put faith in what you had seen, or dreamt."

"Not dreamt, Mr. M'Lachlan. I had been asleep, but not dreaming; and on awaking suddenly, the first object that met my view was the figure of my dear father."

"His ghost, or spirit?"

"Rather, I should say, an apparition evoked by a last supreme effort of his will, in magnetic relation with mine, in the moment prior to his dissolution."

"What, then, is your opinion of death?"

I was fortunately spared the pain of again refusing to give him an answer by the entrance of his wife, who good-humouredly exclaimed—

"What are you two gentlemen discussing so earnestly? Thomas has knocked at the door half a dozen times, and could not make you hear."

"A very painful subject," replied her husband. "We were canvassing the probabilities of the death of Cochrane's father."

"Do you really think he is dead?" inquired Mrs. M'Lachlan, feelingly.

"I am quite certain of it," I replied.

We then followed her into the drawing-room, where we had coffee, and I was soon attacked by Robert.

"Whatever have you and the gov. been talking about so long, eh?"

Before I could answer his question, Miss Marshall came up, and asked me to sing.

I did not feel particularly inclined to comply with her request; but, as my doing so would save me a cross-examination which I must perforce parry, I replied that I should be most happy.

Bob growled, but I took no notice, and followed the governess to the piano.

On the whole, we spent a very pleasant evening; indeed, it was genuine pleasure to sing a duet with Miss M'Lachlan, who had a peculiarly sweet voice. Our performance brought tears into her mother's eyes, and was vehemently applauded by her brother, who, as a rule, affected to despise "screeching."

When the music was over I took my leave, firmly declining Robert's offer to see me part of the way home.

Need I say I dreamt all night of Emma, and awoke in the morning to dream of her again?

It was well I had passed my examination.

But I had yet another ordeal to undergo. The law required me to possess two diplomas, and I had only one.

"I shall take out my second at the King and Queen's," said Robert.

"I shall go to Edinburgh for mine," I replied. "The cost is less than half what it is over here."

It is not my intention to dilate upon this portion of my career. I liked what I saw of the capital of Scotland very well; passed a fair examination fairly; and, after a stay of ten days, returned to Dublin, to find an Australian letter, in a strange handwriting, waiting for me at the boarding-house.

The letter was brief. It was written by Dr. Middleton, whom I well knew by name and repute, and merely recounted the circumstances attending my dear father's death; which really happened, making due allowance for the difference between Irish and Australian time, at the hour in which I had fancied I saw him in Skinner's-alley.

During my absence in Scotland, Robert had passed his examination at the King and Queen's with as much éclat as he had done at the college; and was complimented by the president and fellows, who unanimously awarded him a special certificate of merit—an honour expressive of their highest approbation, and obtained but by a very few.

"What are you going to do with yourself

now, Bob?" I inquired upon the occasion of our first meeting.

"The gov. won't let me go into the army," he replied; "but insists upon my going down to look after some place in the North where there is a dispensary or something vacant. I said I wouldn't go an inch unless he let you go with me. You'll come?"

"My dear fellow," I began, "the expense—"

"Hang the expense!" replied my friend, loftily. "The gov. shall stand that, Jonathan."

"Very well, Bob," I answered—"I'll do anything you please; but I must seriously think of going home."

"If you do, I'll shoot you—after we come back from Dumfernaghalee, or whatever the name of the place is."

So it was arranged; but, as it turned out, I had to make the journey alone. My friend Bob, when the time came, made out some excuse for staying in Dublin; and I started on my wildgoose chase, as I have already stated, without him.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON my return, without success, from Dumfernaghalee, the embargo was withdrawn—not without reluctance, certainly, but finally withdrawn—from the fulfilment of Robert's long-contemplated vision of a military life.

It is needless to say that he was first of the first at Netley.

He did his best to persuade me to try for an army appointment too; but a military career was not at all my vocation, and I resolutely declined complying with his wishes; pleading, as was my daily custom, that I must really begin to think about going home.

My poor father's death had left me in possession of between two and three hundred a year, partly derived from investments in the colonial funds, and partly from the rent of some small houses in one of the suburbs of Melbourne.

Day after day found me repeating to myself and my acquaintances the same burden of the same old song, "I must really go home."

On one occasion, Mrs. M'Lachlan said to me—

"Why don't you take a wife, and settle down in Dublin, or at least in Ireland, Mr. Cochrane? It is the land of your mother's

nativity, and ought to be as dear to you as your own."

"Pardon me," I replied—"I feel such a craving to go home to Australia."

"Then why do you not go?"

"I really cannot tell, Mrs. M'Lachlan."

"Do you mean you cannot or will not?"

"A little of both, perhaps."

"Shall I tell you why?"

"If you please."

"You are in love."

"Mrs. M'Lachlan!"

"Is it not the case?"

I made no reply.

"Your silence shows that I am correct," said the lady, smiling. "May I ask the fair one's name?"

This was said seriously, and not at all in the bantering tone one might infer from the phraseology in which the question was put.

"Spare me! I have no knowledge that she regards me with favour."

"Why do you not inquire?"

"I dare not!"

"'Faint heart,' " quoted the lady.

"Possibly," I answered; "but I dread to have my illusion dispelled."

"Can you not make a guess as to whether or not your love is returned?"

"Sometimes I flatter myself that it is; and the next minute I feel confident it is not."

"Do you see the young lady frequently?"

"Every day."

"Hem!" coughed Mrs. M'Lachlan, as if a sudden light had broken in upon her.

I felt myself sinking down into my shoes, and longed for boldness to make an avowal, and have my fate decided at once and for ever. But I fear I must be a coward, for I could not bring myself to make it.

Mrs. M'Lachlan did not pursue the subject farther, but began to speak about her son.

"He is the handsomest and best fellow in the world," I exclaimed, with enthusiasm.

The mother's eyes filled with tears of pardonable pride.

"He is very fond of you," she said.

"Not more so than I am of him," I replied. "There is nothing I would not do for him."

Bob dropping in just then, the conversation flowed into another channel; he was to leave us the next day for London.

"Will you come out for a stroll this even-

ing, mum? and be sure you don't bring the Marshall with you."

Of course Mrs. M'Lachlan assented to his request, as she would have done to any other he had preferred on the eve of his departure, or, for the matter of that, at any time; for the truth must be told, if he could have been spoiled she would have spoiled him.

After dinner, we four—that is, Bob and his mother, and Miss M'Lachlan and I—set out for the last walk we should all take together for some months.

Bob made his mother take his arm, and Miss M'Lachlan and I walked on before them, side by side; but with the distance of two or three feet between us.

Gradually the space between her mother and brother and us increased.

Bob, I knew, was only too glad to see his sister and me together. But his mother? Doubtless she also was a consenting party to my companionship with her daughter.

She had probably read my secret that afternoon, and, far from feeling annoyed at my presumption, was actually giving me the opportunity she would naturally suppose I longed for.

Did I long for it?

I scarcely knew.

We talked, what about I do not remember. I knew not at the time, how should I recollect it now?

We walked on and on, stood for a minute or two to watch the mimic waterfall below the high embankment opposite Milltown; on and on past Blackburn's Gate; on farther and still farther, until Rathfarnham Bridge compelled us to a halt.

It was getting dark, though the summer evenings are wonderfully prolonged in Dublin.

"What has become of mamma and Robert?" exclaimed my companion, upon looking round and perceiving they were not in sight.

"I suppose they have turned back," I replied.

Miss M'Lachlan made no direct reply; but after a silence of a second or two, she said—

"We must make haste after them, or it will be quite dark before we reach the embankment."

"It will be better to cross over Milltown old bridge, and go back through the village."

"Yes, that will be the best way."

"You had better take my arm," I ventured at length to say.

She made no answer, but placed the tips of her fingers upon my sleeve.

The tiny hand that rested on my arm trembled, as I thought; and the breath of my companion was nearly, if not quite, as troubled as my own.

She knew, too, what was coming as well as I did myself.

Then came to me the inward question—"Are you doing right in violating the confidence reposed in you, and taking advantage of what, after all, may be but an accidental circumstance, to trouble the peace of a family that has received you as a friend of their son, and not at all as the suitor of their daughter—a family, too, so immeasurably beyond you in position?"

Verily, conscience does make cowards of us all.

I could not answer my questioner; and after a violent, if brief, inward conflict, forced it to be silent.

What harm, after all, in what I was doing?

Possibly my suit would be rejected; but why, if that were likely to be the case, did my little captive flutter so timidly against my breast?

If, after all, she should consent to be my wife, would it not be because she loved me?

The hand I had taken in my own was not withdrawn. I pressed it. The pressure was almost imperceptibly returned.

"You love me, Emma—you really love me?"

The faintest echo of a "Yes" confirmed my hopes. I had not lived in vain.

"And you will be my little wife?"

"Yes, if you will take such a silly young thing as I am."

"My darling!"

I drew her close beside me, and we sat down on a bench by the side of the path.

"Mamma will not like me to go out to Australia," she said at length, after we had talked of many things.

"What is your own feeling about it, darling?"

"If you decide upon returning, I shall not let you go by yourself," she replied, archly.

"But, frankly, you would rather stay here?"

"Frankly, I would prefer to remain at home."

"Dearest, so you shall; since my poor

father's death, there is nothing out there to compel me to return."

She nestled closer to me. It was very nearly dark.

"They will wonder what has become of us," she said, smiling.

"Do you think they will not guess?"

"I suppose they will," she replied, with a deep blush, which I divined, if I could no longer see.

The pride and happiness I felt, in having gained for my own the first and sole possessor of my heart, were enhanced by the reflection that henceforth Robert was indeed my brother.

"Dear Bob!" I exclaimed, half aloud, in the fulness of my heart.

"How glad he will be," she said; "he is so fond of you. We must go home," gently disengaging herself and rising. "Just fancy what Miss Marshall will say!"

"Bother Miss Marshall!"

What more we said that evening, during the remainder of our walk, I am sure I cannot remember. That we did talk incessantly—or, at least, that I did—I recollect perfectly, and that my darling answered me as occasion seemed to require.

I recounted the whole history of my not very eventful life. I entered minutely into the delicate question of ways and means. How pitiful my resources seemed!

"I am but a poor man," I concluded, with a sigh.

"For shame!" replied Emma. "You are quite rich enough. I am sure we were happier when we lived in the cottage at Clontarf than ever we have been since we moved to The Grove, and have been surrounded by all that hateful ceremony."

By this time we had reached The Grove, and hoped to have passed in unobserved; but the lodge-keeper had fastened the gate, and I had to ring several times before I could make any one hear.

At last the gardener made his appearance, and, in a gruff voice, inquired—

"Who's there?"

"Open the gate, Martin," said Emma.

"I beg your pardon, miss. Sure I had no ideo you could be out at this time o' night—and Mr. Cochrane, too," he added, in a lower key. "The Lord be good to us all!"

I saw Emma up to the house, but resisted all her entreaties to go in. I really felt that I could not face them all.

"My darling," I said, "you must break it to your mother, and I'll call up in the morning to learn my fate."

It might be supposed that I did not sleep much that night; but I did—as soundly as ever I remember to have slept in my life. Neither did I dream, but awoke next morning as gay and capable of enjoying life as ever.

My "ghost" howled as usual; and instead of feeling vexed, as was generally the case, at the dismal noise, I laughed at it, and set myself seriously to task to find out whence it came.

My efforts were at last crowned with success. The partition that divided my room from the lobby was made of lath and plaster, and between it and the ceiling was a gap, some eighth of an inch or so in width, through which the wind, when any of the doors downstairs were open, whistled—rattling against the upper edge of the room paper, thereby producing the sounds which puzzled and annoyed me, and filled my cockatoo with rage.

From that moment the reign of the "ghost" at Carlton-terrace was over—he never reappeared.

"I hope you had a pleasant evening, Mr. Cochrane," said Miss Fernley next morning, as I sat down to a late breakfast.

"Very," I replied, my face glowing with the remembrance.

"So I should imagine," she said, with a sneer. "I shouldn't have thought it of you"—with tremendous emphasis on the pronoun.

"Thought what?" I asked.

"Nothing," replied the lady.

I really did not at the time see the drift of her insinuation, and concluded she was very cross that morning, probably because I was down late.

"Have you had a letter from Mrs. Woodward?" I inquired, by way of putting her in a good humour.

"Not to-day," she answered. "They were very well yesterday—at least, they were when she wrote the letter I received yesterday."

"Hem!"

I was making haste to finish my breakfast, and could not afford to waste any more time upon her.

"Do you dine at home to-day, Mr. Cochrane?" she presently inquired.

"Yes, Miss Fernley—that is," I continued,

suddenly recollecting the ordeal through which I had to pass, "no—I mean, yes. There, I can't say for certain. However, don't wait for me, in any case."

"We never do wait for anybody," remarked the lady, severely.

"Not now—that Mr. Woodward's gone away," put in Miss Sharman, in an undertone, and her most lingering drawl.

"I shall not dine at home either, Miss Fernley," observed "Prince" Old.

He was a great man among the Freemasons, and had attained to the highest dignities in the Order.

"Well, gentlemen," replied our landlady, with a smirk, "if the proverb be true which says, 'The more the merrier,' it is also a fact, according to the same authority, 'The fewer there are to share it, the better will be the cheer.'"

"Bravo, Miss Fernley!" we all exclaimed in chorus.

But our applause had not the hoped-for effect of restoring that lady's good humour.

"It's me belafe she's got out o' bed this mornin' wrong side foreinst," observed Miss Sharman, confidentially, to her neighbour—the clerk who rejoiced in the name of Bill—who grunted an assent, or possibly a dissent—it did not matter which.

When I had finished my breakfast, I returned to my own room; for it was too early to think of going to The Grove; and, dying as I was to ascertain my fate, I was obliged to sit down and wait.

"Don't come before twelve," had been Emma's parting injunction over-night.

At five and twenty minutes to twelve I went out, intending to walk round by Rathgar, when I should just reach The Grove in time.

I had not gone far when I met an acquaintance by the way.

"Hallo! where are you off to so fast, Burra?"—the sobriquet bestowed upon me by the men at St. Cuthbert's.

"I am going for a walk, Paddles," addressing the fellow by his nickname.

"I'll go with you."

I wished him far enough off, but shame prevented me from saying so.

"Where are you going?" he inquired.

"As far as Rathfarnham Bridge."

"And then?"

"Along the Dodder, home by Clonskeagh."

"Ah! talking about Clonskeagh, have you seen M'Lachlan lately?"

"I saw him last night."

"Do you know his sister?"

"Know whom?" I answered, rather stiffly, for I could not bear to hear the man speak of her—it was profanation.

"Mac's sister."

"I have the honour of Miss M'Lachlan's acquaintance," I replied, more stiffly than before.

Paddles had the audacity to laugh—

"Pretty intimately acquainted, too, I should say."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing at all."

He spoke in so very significant a manner that my face began to glow.

"You do mean something, Paddles," I said. "What is it? Speak out like a man, if you have anything to say. I hate insinuations."

"Well, it's just this way. Bully and I were taking a walk round the river last night, it might be about half-past ten or it might be eleven, and we heard—" here he paused, and looked at me with a disagreeable leer.

"Well?"

"'Le doux son d'un baiser tendre!'"

TABLE TALK.

OUR friend the Shah has formed the topic of conversation of late in every class of society. Only this week his domestic relations were being discussed over a gleaming pewter vessel, which evidently contained beer, by a gentleman in the dust profession, and a purveyor of cabbages, borne for sale on a long, shallow tray drawn by a donkey. "You see," said the dustman, "speaking as a married man, I don't think these here Pusshuns acts at all on the square—carrying on them Mormon games. What does a chap want with three wives?" "Bless you!" was the response, "they can't help it—it's breed. Their women aint up to much; and as to three or four, why it 'ud take ten Pusshun women to make one ekal to my missus!"

ONE TRIES very hard to believe your Irish bull is generally an invention of the Joe Miller type; but somehow one's Hibernian friends will say droll things bordering on the blunder. For instance, O'Shaughnessy, after being chaffed as being an Irish repre-

sentative of the Shah family, who settled in Persia during the reign of the celebrated Caliph Haroun Alraschid, said that a good deal had been said about our Eastern visitor's gray horse having a magenta tail, but it was no novelty, for the dandies of Queen Elizabeth's day used to dye their beards scarlet. "But," said a friend, "there is a good deal of difference between an ass's head and a horse's tail." "Pooh!" said O'S., "it only depends on the way you put him in harness. And besides, the scarlet beards did not appertain to asses at all, but to bucks."

APROPOS of the crusade now going on against the milk-sellers of London, who are being fined under the Adulteration Act, and very often for what they cannot help; for many of them purchase largely from country dairies, sending their carts to the various termini for those great churn-like tins, supposed to contain pure milk, but which tins somehow contrive to slake their thirst at some pump or another before they reach the London dealer, who often buys milk and water, to water afresh—apropos, then, of the milk-watering process, what is to become of the old lady of whom we wot? She supplies the morning and afternoon lacteal wants of a seaside resort, by means of the produce of four cows. She keeps these four beasts in the winter season, when visitors are not, and sells all her milk herself; and she keeps four cows in the summer season, when visitors are. But now she does not sell all her milk herself; for the task entails the assistance of a man, so great is the influx of extra business. It is a curious instance this of the elasticity of fluids, and well worthy the attention of Dr. Meymott Tidy, the analyst. It will be as well, though, not to mention names, or else, as said before, what would become of the old lady who keeps the cows?

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation. Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 290.

July 19, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER VI.

RIVIERE MAKES PLANS.



ARE you mad, Rivière?"

The question was asked by Pierre, as he stood holding the other by the wrists, and gazing fixedly in his eyes.

"Mad?—yes," was the reply, given at last, in a deep, hoarse voice.

"It is enough to make me. But, there, let go—it is over now."

And with a sigh that was almost a groan, Rivière crept shivering away to the darkest corner of their cell, and sat there motionless till the coming of the gaoler with their morning meal.

The interval had been spent by Pierre with his eternal straw plait, which grew yard by yard, and was rolled in a neat coil as he went on.

"Breakfast," said Pierre, as soon as they were alone; and he laid his hand upon his companion's shoulder.

To his surprise, Rivière rose up, calm and thoughtful-looking, holding out his hand, which the other grasped with effusion.

"That is better," he said.

"Better?" replied Rivière, with a sad smile. "Well, yes—I think so. One must live; for there is much to do in the future. Pierre, I was mad all last night; but it is all past now, and I have begun to think out the future. I thank you for saving my life. But it will go hard with others."

Pierre looked searchingly at his fellow-prisoner, wondering whether a greater madness were not on him now; but it was only to see him sit and eat quietly of the bread, and drink the poor, thin coffee brought for their morning meal.

Days glided by, with Rivière turned thoughtful and silent. The restless pacing of the floor was at an end, and for hours he would not stir, but sat as if revolving some plan. The restless nights, too, ceased, and the prison seemed at times quite cheerful to Pierre, when his companion sat down and conversed with him quietly about some ordinary matter—the length of his straw plait, the quality of the food, or the gloom or brightness of the day.

"There is something to come of this," thought Pierre; and at times a shiver of apprehension ran through him.

Was this the calm that was to be succeeded by a storm—by a maniacal outbreak?

He watched Rivière nervously by day, and at night he never retired without a feeling of dread, lest, even if his fellow-prisoner refrained from attacking him, he should find him some morning dead by his own hand.

And yet all seemed very much altered. Rivière was, to all appearances, quiet and resigned to his fate; and by degrees the apprehensions of Pierre became lulled, till one morning they broke out afresh, for Rivière said to him, quietly—

"The sharpened nail, Pierre, that you took away from me that morning—you have it safe?"

"Safe?—yes. Hidden away where you could never find it," exclaimed Pierre, excitedly.

"Don't be alarmed," said Rivière, smiling sadly. "I shall not attempt suicide again. I was mad that morning, Pierre; but it is all past now, and I mean to live. There, do not look so suspiciously at me. I am

not trying to deceive you. Only, keep that nail safely—we may require it."

No more passed that day nor the next; and straw plait after plait was made, and afterwards sold for a trifle by the gaolers of the prison; the money obtained being expended in some little attempt to alleviate the wretchedness of their fare. Pierre grew more and more satisfied with the behaviour of his companion; for Rivière began to plait straw by his side, working with tolerable neatness, till Pierre exclaimed, one day—

"There, did I not tell you how this work would prove a relief?"

To his amazement, Rivière did not reply, but sat busily using his fingers; till, suddenly, he threw down the plait and said—

"Never mind the straw. Do you feel certain that this is La Peray?"

"Yes—certain," was the reply. "And this must be the Gironde passing by the walls."

"The Gironde? Yes—the river we crossed when they brought us in here. Do you think they mean to keep us here?"

"Who can say? See how we have been changed about already. There are far-off islands where we might be taken—Cayenne, Martinique; or perhaps they may keep us at home here, for are there not the galleys at Toulon?" said Pierre, bitterly.

And he sighed as he thought of the hard labour, and looked at his soft white hands.

"Even that would be better, out in the free air," exclaimed Rivière, with animation. "But," he continued, grimly, "there is escape from it all."

"Hush!" whispered Pierre, shuddering as he recalled how that morning he had arrested his companion's hand just as, in his mad despair, he was about to pierce his throat with a nail he had contrived to draw from their table, and had sharpened on the stone floor to a keen edge. "Hush! That will come in its own good time. It is not for us—"

"But I mean real escape," said Rivière, with animation—"escape from here, and, if needs be, fight for our liberty."

"Escape!" exclaimed Pierre, gazing with a startled aspect at the speaker, as if he doubted his sanity. "What! Get out—away from prison?"

"Yes; escape—freedom."

"But how?" said Pierre, excitedly.

"Let us think it out," was the reply.

"But, first, how long have we been here?"

The little bag of pieces of straw was once more brought into requisition, and after counting, Pierre said—

"Six weeks to-day."

"Six weeks!—six weeks only! It seems like a year. But let us think it out. Don't speak to me now."

He went and sat down upon the edge of his bed, wrinkled up his face, and remained silent for quite an hour, during which Pierre looked up from his straw-plaiting from time to time, to scrutinize the earnest face before him.

Twice he essayed to draw Rivière into conversation upon the engrossing theme; but without further result than a sign to be silent.

And in this fashion ended the day.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WATCHWORD.

THE night passed without a sign from Rivière, and the younger man lay restless and feverish, the words he had heard having raised up exciting visions for the future. Towards morning, though, he dropped asleep, to dream of freedom; but his rest was brief, for at daybreak he was aroused by Rivière shaking him roughly.

"Up!" said the latter, sternly—"up, quickly. We have wasted time, and now we must work."

"What for?" said Pierre.

"What for? For liberty and justice. Now to work."

They sat down in the corner of the cell, talking for a while; then, rising, Rivière walked to the wall beneath the grated window of their cell, and leaned his arms against it, stooping so as to form of his body an incline, up which Pierre climbed, so that he could stand upon his companion's back, hold on by the bars, and gaze long and earnestly from the grating.

Now and again there came the slow, measured tramp of the sentry on duty, whose beat lay right beneath their window; and at such times Pierre would loose his hold upon the bars, and, merely steadying himself by resting his fingers upon the sill, stoop down, and wait impatiently until the soldier had passed.

Three times this had occurred, and as often the inspection was resumed, Rivière always replying to his companion's query as to whether he was tired—

"Go on."

At last the sentry paused just in front of the grated window, and they heard him ground his musket upon the pavement. Pierre leaped lightly down, and together they retired to the cell corner.

"Well," said Rivière, in a whisper, "what in the front?"

"High wall."

"And on the left?"

"A higher wall."

"The right?"

"Wall, whose top I cannot see."

"Could you see nothing more?" asked Rivière.

"Nothing but cruel, hard, cold stones everywhere."

"But if you had stood higher?"

"My head touched the top of the opening as it was," said Pierre, gloomily; and then the prisoners sat thinking.

"We *must* escape, Pierre," said Rivière, after half an hour's silence.

"Yes; but how?" said the other, with a slight shrug of his shoulders.

"By constant trying. The rat gnaws his way through where he will."

"Yes; but we are no rats," said Pierre, bitterly.

"And the bird beats at its wires, or the door, till the first grow loose, or the latter is unfastened," continued Rivière, without heeding his companion's words.

"Or wears its poor breast bare of feathers, and dies of a broken heart," cried Pierre, passionately. "Let it rest! What can we do in this stony tomb but write our epitaphs upon its walls, and then lie down quietly and die?"

"As you deserve to die," said Rivière, "for being a coward. You would have killed the King."

"No," said Pierre, eagerly, "I would not. I begged that he might be spared, though he had cruelly persecuted those who belonged to me. It was in a mad fit of revenge, mingled with what they called patriotism, that they were bent upon his destruction. What could I do? Would you have had me denounce—"

Rivière started as if he had been stung.

"Would you have had me give up those who were my relatives and friends? Was the King to be more to me than these?"

"But you countenanced the deed with your presence."

"Yes; but was I not forced? They knew that I was against the plot, so they would

not trust me, lest I should betray them. So I was made to be a witness of it all."

Pierre shuddered as he spoke.

"It was a cowardly, cruel act," said Rivière; "and one for which others suffer. Look at me."

"I declared you were innocent a score of times," said Pierre, passionately; "but they would not hear me."

"Let that pass now," said Rivière. "We have other things to think of."

He rose from his seat, and slowly and carefully began to examine every stone in the floor and walls of the cell—tapping each with his knuckles, and testing the cement in the interstices with the tooth from a metal comb. Now he was in the dark corners, now reaching high up above his head; but every step was taken earnestly, and with an air of keen investigation which nothing escaped.

A word from Pierre arrested him, and in two steps he was at his seat, calmly picking his nails; for there was the sound of footsteps outside, gradually coming nearer. Then came a cessation of the steps, the rattling of bolts and keys; and then the gaoler appeared with their rations, which he placed upon their bench, whilst his two attendants looked round the place, examining wall and window.

Another minute, and the door was once more banged to, and bolted, and the steps heard to go echoing away.

"Eat," said Rivière, pushing the black bread to his companion. "We have only one thing to think of now—escape. Eat, and grow strong; for we shall need all our power."

The miserable meal was eaten in silence; and then, with his eyes glittering and his teeth set, Rivière rose up.

"Now, then," he said, "put away that straw plait. We must get to work, for I cannot sit down, and die here. I must meet her again, face to face."

"But, mind, I do not accuse her," said Pierre.

"Nor I," said Rivière. "My wife—Madame Rivière—shall have her opportunities for defence. I am no foolish Othello in my passions; but, as the judge said to me at my trial, the case looks black against her; and as to Lemaire—"

He said those last words through his teeth, and then stopped, breathing hard, with an intensity in his expression of counte-

nance that made Pierre shudder, as he thought over the possible result of a meeting between these men.

"Have patience," said Pierre. "Time works strange changes. Matters are, perhaps, not so bad as we have painted them."

And once more he took up the straw plait, and began to add to its length.

"Patience!" exclaimed Rivière, angrily. Life is too short for patience, and we have much to do, instead of waiting for it to be done. Life, Pierre, must henceforth for us be wild, exciting, feverish. We must work together for life, since the existence here is but death. And now, once more—escape! You hear that word? It is to be henceforth, till we are free, our watchword—our sole thought, our very life. Escape! You know what it means? It is a secret that we must penetrate. There will be obstacles and dangers, sleepless nights and restless days, pain and weariness, bitter suffering; but it will always cheer us on, and we must achieve our liberty, or die in the attempt. You understand—you are with me?"

"Yes," said Pierre, "to the end."

"Then we shall succeed," cried Rivière.

"Yes," said Pierre, with his face lighting up—"escape!"

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ARRIVAL.

IT must have been the size of the house that made people in it given to yawn, for the houses in Grosvenor-square are of goodly proportions. In summer time, the very windows, half open, seem to be in the act of yawning, and the great door likewise, when "the family" are out at a dinner party, and the butler and gentlemen in uniform are cooling themselves, and yawning upon the whitened steps. As a rule, houses in Grosvenor-square are not taken by their inhabitants: they come to them by birth, inheritance—though generally, with the clog upon them of a yearly rental of no slight sum. In fact, the rent is stated in three figures, and those of goodly size.

Sir Richard Lawler only had to walk into possession of his house in Grosvenor-square when he came of age. In fact, his was not a brain that would have achieved a mansion. He found it well-furnished, too, but yawning; and he yawned, till he woke up one day to the fact that the place was not completely furnished without a wife.

Even here he had no trouble, for his

friends selected the lady for him; and one day, when he was weary of hunting, tired of throwing salmon flies, aching of foot with tramping the heather, and sick of the sea in his yacht, he proudly walked up the carpeted steps at St. George's, Hanover-square, and afterwards descended them, with the hand of that acknowledged beauty, Adelaide, Lady Lawler, upon his arm.

They were very happy—they must have been, for they told everybody that they were—and all friends congratulated themselves upon the accession to the visiting list.

Time glided on. They travelled on the Continent; returned to England; visited, and were visited. An heir was born, made much of; and then followed another visit to the Continent, ending with a stay at Paris, and the encounter with the Rivières.

Sir Richard Lawler was a very good-hearted man, and he really exerted himself strongly to procure Rivière's freedom. He would also have done anything possible to aid Madame Rivière; but, as we have seen, all advances were rejected, seeing that they came through Lady Lawler; and soon after the English milor returned to town, and after a few squabbles—an inelegant term this, but most apropos—with her ladyship, London life began again, the customary yawnings took place in the big mansion, and the Rivières were forgotten.

There had been festive proceedings in Grosvenor-square, for the Lawlers had given a dinner party. Dinner parties were not unusual there; but this had been an extra affair, wherein the aid of the florist and pastrycook was called, and Edgington had the task of forming one of his zebraic canopies from the kerbstone to the front door. Lady Lawler had been gorgeous in the family diamonds, and, at dessert-time, there had been a small procession:

Footman, bearing a high chair.
Chief butler, with special dessert plate and d'oyley.

Jane, bearing the heir, in white and scarlet.

Rear-guard of Sarah.

The heir was greeted with a chorus of feminine raptures; and the bearer had to pause at chair-backs for the family hope to be kissed, with kisses loud and chirrupy—

little liberties these, which he resented with dabs of his podgy fists. What time Papa, at the foot of the table, smiled like an amiable aristocrat in wax; Mamma shook her fan, and said, "Naughty Tivey"—a sweet, feminine, lisping formation of the baptismal name Clive; and Jane adjured her charge to "be a good boy, then," with the sole effect of the young monster making a dab at a dowager's front, and dragging it hugely askew.

Jane—a fresh-coloured, plump nurse of five and twenty, glowing with health and pink ribbons—stayed behind his Heirship's chair when he was beside mamma, it being an acknowledged fact she was the only personage in the house who could subdue the young gentleman in times of mutiny; and matters went on tolerably satisfactorily, save that Master Clive upset a finger-glass over the black kerseymers of the Right Honourable Randall Spavin, M.P. for Mowbray, and M.F.H., Hippoly county.

This little mishap, though to a guest, was quite balanced by the next display of a mercurial temperament, wherein the hope of the house swept a glass of port from the table to meander down the amber glories of Lady Lawler's *moiré antique*.

But in a lively child such trifles are easily forgiven; and who, as a guest, could refrain from an amused smile when the excited child stood up, regardless of remonstrance, in his chair, and then made a dart, and scrambled on to the table to achieve possession of the elephant-supported sugar temple? but only to be caught by one leg by Jane, and reseated in the high chair with a sponge cake in his fist.

"He was so full of life," Lady Lawler smilingly informed her guests.

Then Jane had to be busy for a few minutes picking up dessert forks, spoons, a plate and a wine glass in two pieces; and at last, at a signal from her master—a signal resented by a reproachful look from her ladyship—the girl had to seize upon her charge, and prepare to bear him out of the room.

But this attack was met furiously by the heir, who commenced his defence with a howl of rage, and was then borne out, kicking and screaming furiously, making, too, little snatches at Jane's hair, or the head-dress of any lady he passed.

He continued to make himself heard in a cheery *diminuendo*, lasting from the dining-

room door to the nursery on the second floor, where the closing of a baize door resulted in peace to the house below.

"Very passionate, but a dear, affectionate child," said Lady Lawler, apologetically, to the Honourable Randall.

"All the spirit in him for making a good cross-country rider," said the master of foxhounds.

"Sign of health—fine lungs," observed the family physician.

"Give way to him because he's so young," said Sir Richard, who was rather annoyed.

"Oh, dear me, yes," simpered her ladyship, rising with the other ladies, and departing for the drawing-room.

The wine, the coffee, the tea upstairs—all had followed in due course. A few friends had dropped in during the evening. Carriages had come and carriages had gone, and an extra amount of yawning had been performed in the hall. Taking advantage of Master Clive having sobbed himself soundly asleep, Jane had left him in charge of the under-nurse, and descended to get her supper in the servants' hall; but she was not to reach the bottom without her adventure—being caught on the stairs by Mr. James, one of the footmen, who tried to display his emotions towards the fair maiden by passing his arm round her, and stealing a kiss.

The attempt was a signal failure, for Jane gave him a sharp box on the ear, which sent the hair powder flying in a cloud; and when the recipient emerged therefrom, the damsel had gone.

"A hard-hearted creecher!" exclaimed the injured swain.

He probably meant hard-handed; but he said no more—only retired to the pantry, where he administered a few more dabs of the scented starch to his well-oiled locks, and then proceeded to the servants' hall.

No Jane!

Making some excuse, he rose and left his place, going gently down a long stone passage to the front of the house. Here he turned into the housekeeper's sanctuary—a large press-surrounded room, looking upon the area.

It was as he expected. Going close to the window, he could dimly see two figures—one of each sex—talking eagerly together; and Mr. James gave a groan as he stood with clenched fists. There was the secret of the contumely with which his advances

were met—there was the reason, in the shape of a man!

James ground his teeth, as he stood watching for a few minutes, and then a spasm seemed to seize him as he witnessed a hasty good-bye, wherein something took place not followed by a box on the ear; and then, as the area gate clanged and the door closed, Mr. James followed the slightly flushed object of his misplaced affection to the servants' hall, breathing hard as he watched her at her supper—always avoiding his eye—eating nothing himself, but drinking freely horns of ale from the great black-jack.

But all this was over. The last guest had departed; and, previous to retiring for the night, Sir Richard was having a cigar in the study, while his lady was dreamily watching the golden caverns in the fire as the cinders fell together with a musical tinkle. Twice she glanced up at Sir Richard; but he was deep in the contemplation of the wreaths of vapour rising from his cigar, and doubtless his reverie would have ended in a doze, had not a loud, resonant peal at the bell made both start, and gaze towards the door.

The step of one of the servants was heard to pass the door, and then followed the sounds of unbolting, rattling chain, and loud shoot back of lock; and then, as a gust of wind swept through the hall, it brought with it the whispering of eager voices.

A minute or two elapsed, and then, when Sir Richard's patience was nearly exhausted, and he was about to see for himself the cause of this late interruption, the footman appeared at the door.

"Well?"

"If you please, Sir Richard, here's a foreign party as says he must see you."

"A what?"

"A furrener, Sir Richard, and a wom—I mean a lady—with him. Wouldn't give no card, Sir Richard."

"But what's his name?—what business?"

"Wouldn't give no name; and said, as far as I could make out, Sir Richard, as he had no business; but he's a very ignorant party, Sir Richard—couldn't hardly speak English. I did tell him to come in the morning; but he said he must see you now."

"Good heavens, Richard!" exclaimed Lady Lawler, in an agitated voice, as she rose, and leaned over his chair. "Can it be——"

"There, I don't know—I will see!" exclaimed Sir Richard, his face flushing with annoyance. "Leave the room, James. No, stop—I will see these people. Show them into the dining-room."

"Yes, Sir Richard."

And the man turned to go.

"What sort of people are they?"

"Rather shabby parties, Sir Richard."

"Show them in here, James," said Lady Lawler, in a tone of voice that made her husband start; for though in some things her ladyship was but woman and water, in others she was spirit itself.

"Yes, m'lady," said the man as he backed out; and the next minute he ushered in a couple of closely muffled figures, who stood perfectly still while Sir Richard motioned the man to leave the room, which he did; but not so rapidly but that he saw a portion of that which followed. Nor did he close his ears so tightly that he was unable to catch from his lady the exclamation—

"Good heavens!"

And from his master the words—

"Monsieur Rivière!"

"THE BIG FALLS."

"IT'S a divil of a place," said Sala's Irish driver, when taking him to Niagara in winter. "Divil a bit of breakfast is there for love or money; but the Falls are in illigant condition, *and you may see them all the year round for nothing.*"

Sala's first feeling upon seeing them was one of "bitter disappointment. Was this all? There was a great deal of water, a great deal of foam, a great deal of spray, and a thundering noise." This was in the light of a gloomy day. Out burst the sun, and his description now becomes studded with gold and gems, rainbow colours shine from his pages, and all that was before dull, dingy, and cheerless becomes rainbow-like in lustre.

But we have had another and more adventurous traveller lately at Niagara, in the shape of Professor Tyndall, who was ready to view the Falls from a new stand-point, and in the interests of science to see all that was possible of this marvellous work of Nature. His account of his visit has been printed in the papers of the Royal Institution, and from this account we give the following extracts, in which it will be seen that the Professor looked at the Falls from no show-

man's stand-point, but penetrated right beneath the falling waters:—

"On Friday, the 1st of November, 1872, just before reaching the village of Niagara Falls, I caught, from the railway train, my first glimpse of the smoke of the cataract. Immediately after my arrival, I went with a friend to the northern end of the American Fall. It may be that my mood at the time toned down the impression produced by the first aspect of this grand cascade; but I felt nothing like disappointment, knowing, from old experience, that time and close acquaintanceship, the gradual interweaving of mind and nature, must powerfully influence my final estimate of the scene. After dinner we crossed to Goat Island, and turning to the right, reached the southern end of the American Fall. The river is here studded with small islands. Crossing a wooden bridge to Luna Island, and clasping a tree which grows near its edge, I looked long at the cataract, which here shoots down the precipice like an avalanche of foam. It grew in power and beauty as I gazed upon it. The channel, spanned by the wooden bridge, was deep, and the river there doubled over the edge of the precipice like the swell of a muscle, unbroken. The ledge here overhangs, the water being poured out far beyond the base of the precipice. A space, called the Cave of the Winds, is thus enclosed between the wall of rock and the cataract.

"Goat Island terminates in a sheer dry precipice, which connects the American and Horseshoe Falls. Midway between these is a wooden hut, the residence of the guide to the Cave of the Winds, and from the hut a winding staircase, called Biddle's Stair, descends to the base of the precipice. On the evening of my arrival I went down this stair, and wandered along the bottom of the cliff. One well-known factor in the formation and retreat of the cataract was immediately observed. A thick layer of limestone formed the upper portion of the cliff. This rested upon a bed of soft shale, which extended around the base of the cataract. The violent recoil of the water against this yielding substance crumbles it away, undermining the ledge above, which, unsupported, eventually breaks off, and produces the observed recession.

"At the southern extremity of the Horseshoe is a promontory, formed by the doubling back of the gorge, excavated by the

cataract, and into which it plunges. On the promontory stands a stone building, called the Terrapin Tower, the door of which had been nailed up because of the decay of the staircase within it. Through the kindness of Mr. Townsend, the superintendent of Goat Island, the door was opened for me. From this tower, at all hours of the day, and at some hours of the night, I watched and listened to the Horseshoe Fall. The river here is evidently much deeper than the American branch; and instead of bursting into foam where it quits the ledge, it bends solidly over and falls in a continuous layer of the most vivid green. The tint is not uniform but varied; long stripes of deeper hue alternating with bands of brighter colour. Close to the ledge over which the water rolls, foam is generated, the light falling upon which and flashing back from it is sifted in its passage to and fro, and changed from white to emerald green. Heaps of superficial foam are also formed at intervals along the ledge, and immediately drawn down in long white striæ. Lower down, the surface, shaken by the reaction from below, incessantly rustles into whiteness. The descent finally resolves itself into a rhythm, the water reaching the bottom of the fall in periodic gushes. Nor is the spray uniformly diffused through the air, but is wafted through it in successive veils of gauze-like texture. From all this it is evident that beauty is not absent from the Horseshoe Fall, but majesty is its chief attribute. The plunge of the water is not wild, but deliberate, vast, and fascinating. From the Terrapin Tower, the adjacent arm of the Horseshoe is seen projected against the opposite one, midway down; to the imagination, therefore, is left the picturing of the gulf into which the cataract plunges.

"The delight which natural scenery produces in some minds is difficult to explain, and the conduct which it prompts can hardly be fairly criticized by those who have never experienced it. It seems to me a deduction from the completeness of the celebrated Thomas Young, that he was unable to appreciate natural scenery. 'He had really,' says Dean Peacock, 'no taste for life in the country; he was one of those who thought that no one who was able to live in London would be content to live elsewhere.' Well, Dr. Young, like Dr. Johnson, had a right to his delights; but I can understand a hesitation

to accept them, high as they were, to the exclusion of

'That o'erflowing joy which Nature yields
To her true lovers.'

To all who are of this mind, the strengthening of desire on my part to see and know Niagara Falls, as far as it is possible for them to be seen and known, will be intelligible.

"On the first evening of my visit, I met, at the head of Biddle's Stair, the guide to the Cave of the Winds. He was in the prime of manhood—large, well-built, firm and pleasant in mouth and eye. My interest in the scene stirred up his, and made him communicative. Turning to a photograph, he described, by reference to it, a feat which he had accomplished some time previously, and which had brought him almost under the green water of the Horseshoe Fall. 'Can you lead me there to-morrow?' I asked. He eyed me inquiringly; weighing, perhaps, the chances of a man of light build and with gray in his whiskers in such an undertaking. 'I wish,' I added, 'to see as much of the fall as can be seen, and where you lead I will endeavour to follow.' His scrutiny relaxed into a smile, and he said, 'Very well; I shall be ready for you to-morrow.'

"On the morrow, accordingly, I came. In the hut at the head of Biddle's Stair I re-dressed according to instruction—drawing on two pairs of woollen pantaloons, three woollen jackets, two pairs of socks, and a pair of felt shoes. Even if wet, my guide urged that the clothes would keep me from being chilled; and he was right. A suit and hood of yellow oilcloth covered all. Most laudable precautions were taken by the young assistant of the guide to keep the water out; but his devices broke down immediately when severely tested.

"We descended the stair—the handle of a pitchfork doing, in my case, the duty of an alpenstock. At the bottom my guide inquired whether we should go first to the Cave of the Winds, or to the Horseshoe, remarking that the latter would try us most. I decided to get the roughest done first, and he turned to the left over the stones. They were sharp and trying. The base of the first portion of the cataract is covered with huge boulders, obviously the ruins of the limestone ledge above. The water does not distribute itself uniformly among these,

but seeks for itself channels through which it pours torrentially. We passed some of these with wetted feet, but without difficulty. At length we came to the side of a more formidable current. My guide walked along its edge until he reached its least turbulent portion. Halting, he said, 'This is our greatest difficulty; if we can cross here, we shall get far towards the Horseshoe.'

"He waded in. It evidently required all his strength to steady him. The water rose above his loins, and it foamed still higher. He had to search for footing, amid unseen boulders, against which the torrent rose violently. He struggled and swayed, but he struggled successfully, and finally reached the shallower water at the other side. Stretching out his arm, he said to me, 'Now come on.' I looked down the torrent as it rushed to the river below, which was seething with the tumult of the cataract. De Saussure recommended the inspection of Alpine dangers with the view of making them familiar to the eye before they are encountered; and it is a wholesome custom in places of difficulty to put the possibility of an accident clearly before the mind, and decide beforehand what ought to be done should the accident occur. Thus wound up in the present instance, I entered the water. Even where it was not more than knee-deep its power was manifest. As it rose around me, I sought to split the torrent by presenting a side to it; but the insecurity of the footing enabled it to grasp the loins, twist me fairly round, and bring its impetus to bear upon the back. Further struggle was impossible; and feeling my balance hopelessly gone, I turned, flung myself towards the bank I had just quitted, and was instantly swept into shallower water.

"The oilcloth covering was a great incumbrance; it had been made for a much stouter man, and standing upright after my submersion, my legs occupied the centres of two bags of water. My guide exhorted me to try again. Prudence was at my elbow, whispering dissuasion; but taking everything into account, it appeared more immoral to retreat than to proceed. Instructed by the first misadventure, I once more entered the stream. Had the alpenstock been of iron it might have helped me; but as it was, the tendency of the water to sweep it out of my hands rendered it worse than useless. I, however, clung to it by habit. Again the torrent rose, and again I wavered; but by

keeping the left hip well against it, I remained upright, and at length grasped the hand of my leader at the other side. He laughed pleasantly. The first victory was gained, and he enjoyed it. 'No traveller,' he said, 'was ever here before.' Soon afterwards, by trusting to a piece of drift wood which seemed firm, I was again taken off my feet, but was immediately caught by a protruding rock.

"We clambered over the boulders towards the thickest spray, which soon became so weighty as to cause us to stagger under its shock. For the most part nothing could be seen. We were in the midst of bewildering tumult, lashed by the water, which sounded at times like the cracking of innumerable whips. Underneath this was the deep, resonant roar of the cataract. I tried to shield my eyes with my hands, and look upwards; but the defence was useless. My guide continued to move on; but at a certain place he halted, and desired me to shelter in his lee and observe the cataract. The spray did not come so much from the upper ledge as from the rebound of the scattered water when it struck the bottom. Hence the eyes could be protected from the blinding shock of the spray, while the line of vision to the upper ledges remained to some extent clear. On looking upwards over the guide's shoulder, I could see the water bending over the ledge, while the Terrapin Tower loomed fitfully through the intermittent spray gusts. We were right under the tower. A little farther on, the cataract, after its first plunge, hit a protuberance some way down, and flew from it in a prodigious burst of spray. Through this we staggered. We rounded the promontory on which the Terrapin Tower stands, and pushed, amid the wildest commotion, along the arm of the Horseshoe, until the boulders failed us, and the cataract fell into the profound gorge of the Niagara River.

"Here my guide sheltered me again, and desired me to look up. I did so, and could see, as before, the green gleam of the mighty curve sweeping over the upper ledge, and the fitful plunge of the water as the spray between us and it alternately gathered and disappeared. An eminent friend of mine often speaks to me of the mistake of those physicians who regard man's ailments as purely chemical, to be met by chemical remedies only. By agreeable emotions, he says, nervous currents are

liberated which stimulate blood, brain, and viscera. A sanative effect of this order I experienced amid the spray and thunder of Niagara. Quickened by the emotions there aroused, the blood sped exultingly through the arteries, abolishing introspection, clearing the heart of all bitterness, and enabling one to think with tolerance, if not with tenderness, on the most relentless and unreasonable foe. Apart from its scientific value, and purely as a moral agent, the play, I submit, is worth the candle. My companion knew no more of me than that I enjoyed the wildness; but as I bent in the shelter of his large frame, he said, 'I should like to see you attempting to describe all this.' He rightly thought it indescribable. The name of this gallant fellow was Thomas Conroy.

"We returned, clambering at intervals up and down, so as to catch glimpses of the most impressive portions of the cataract. We passed under ledges formed by tabular masses of limestone, and through some curious openings formed by the falling together of the summits of the rocks. At length we found ourselves beside our enemy of the morning. My guide halted for a minute or two, scanning the torrent thoughtfully. I said that, as a guide, he ought to have a rope in such a place; but he retorted that, as no traveller had ever thought of coming there, he did not see the necessity of keeping a rope. He waded in. The struggle to keep himself erect was evident enough; he swayed, but recovered himself again and again. At length he slipped, gave way, did as I had done, threw himself flat in the water towards the bank, and was swept into the shallows. Standing in the stream near its edge, he stretched his arm towards me. I retained the pitchfork handle, for it had been useful among the boulders. By wading some way in, the staff could be made to reach him, and I proposed his seizing it. 'If you are sure,' he replied, 'that, in case of giving way, you can maintain your grasp, then I will certainly hold you.' I waded in, and stretched the staff to my companion. It was firmly grasped by both of us. Thus helped, though its onset was strong, I moved safely across the torrent. All danger ended here. We afterwards roamed sociably among the torrents and boulders below the Cave of the Winds. The rocks were covered with organic slime which could not have been walked over with bare feet, but the felt shoes effectually pre-

vented slipping. We reached the cave and entered it, first by a wooden way carried over the boulders, and then along a narrow ledge to the point eaten deepest into the shale. When the wind is from the south, the falling water, I am told, can be seen tranquilly from this spot; but when we were there, a blinding hurricane of spray was whirled against us. On the evening of the same day, I went behind the water on the Canada side, which, I confess, struck me, after the experiences of the morning, as an imposture.

"Still, even this fall is exciting to some nerves." Its effect upon himself is thus vividly described by Mr. Bakewell, jun.:—"On turning a sharp angle of the rock, a sudden gust of wind met us, coming from the hollow between the falls and the rock, which drove the spray directly in our faces, with such force that in an instant we were wet through. When in the midst of this shower-bath, the shock took away my breath; I turned back, and scrambled over the loose stones to escape the conflict. The guide soon followed, and told me that I had passed the worst part. With that assurance I made a second attempt; but so wild and disordered was my imagination that when I had reached half-way I could bear it no longer."

"To complete my knowledge it was necessary to see the fall from the river below it, and long negotiations were necessary to secure the means of doing so. The only boat fit for the undertaking had been laid up for the winter; but this difficulty, through the kind intervention of Mr. Townsend, was overcome. The main one was to secure oarsmen sufficiently strong and skilful to urge the boat where I wished it to be taken. The son of the owner of the boat, a finely-built young fellow, but only twenty, and therefore not sufficiently hardened, was willing to go; and up the river, I was informed, there lived another man who could do anything with the boat which strength and daring could accomplish. He came. His figure and expression of face certainly indicated extraordinary firmness and power. On Tuesday, the 5th of November, we started, each of us being clad in oilcloth. The elder oarsman at once assumed a tone of authority over his companions, and struck immediately in amid the breakers below the American Fall. He hugged the cross freshets instead of striking out into the smoother water. I asked him why he did so, and he replied

that they were directed outwards not downwards. The struggle, however, to prevent the bow of the boat being turned by them, was often very severe.

"The spray was in general blinding, but at times it disappeared and yielded noble views of the fall. The edge of the cataract is crimped by indentations which exalt its beauty. Here and there, a little below the highest ledge, a secondary one juts out; the water strikes it and bursts from it in huge protuberant masses of foam and spray. We passed Goat Island, came to the Horseshoe, and worked for a time at the base of it, the boulders over which Conroy and myself had scrambled a few days previously lying between us and the base. A rock was before us, concealed and revealed at intervals as the waves passed over it. Our leader tried to get above this rock, first on the outside of it. The water however, was here in violent motion. The men struggled fiercely, the older one ringing out an incessant peal of command and exhortation to the younger. As we were just clearing the rock, the bow came obliquely to the surge; the boat was turned suddenly round, and shot with astonishing rapidity down the river. The men returned to the charge, now trying to get up between the half-concealed rock and the boulders to the left. But the current set in strongly through this channel. The tugging was quick and violent, but we made little way. At length, seizing a rope, the principal oarsman made a desperate attempt to get upon one of the boulders, hoping to be able to drag the boat through the channel; but it bumped so violently against the rock, that the man flung himself back, and relinquished the attempt.

"We returned along the base of the American Fall, running in and out among the currents which rushed from it laterally into the river. Seen from below, the American Fall is certainly exquisitely beautiful; but it is a mere frill of adornment to its nobler neighbour the Horseshoe. At times we took to the river, from the centre of which the Horseshoe Fall appeared especially magnificent. A streak of cloud across the neck of Mont Blanc can double its apparent height, so here the green summit of the cataract, shining above the smoke of spray, appeared lifted to an extraordinary elevation."

It is to be hoped that the Professor's next autumn trip will lead him to the Falls of the Yosemite, and also take him down the rapids

of that far western river, which flows in a deepcañon, thousands upon thousands of feet below the level of the surrounding plains—down in a rift so profound that the light comes scantily between the perpendicular walls of rock, and the river presents no shore where a landing could be effected. The trip would be dangerous, no doubt, and we wish the Professor no harm; but to a man of his Alpine powers and waterproofness—to coin a word—the journey would be but a trifle. May many of us hear or read the account.

HOW MY GRANDMOTHER LOST A DAY.

WHEN my grandfather died, my grandmother, finding her house too large as well as too expensive to maintain, determined on leaving it; and, with that view, commenced seeking for a residence, smaller and more suitable, a little out of town. Suburb after suburb was searched, till at last her fancy rested on an old-fashioned red brick house in "a quiet neighbourhood."

The house itself was, perhaps, rather more extensive than she cared for; but it had one great attraction in her eyes—a large garden at the back, in which, with its shady trees and high walls, she fancied she could walk or sit unobserved by her neighbours.

Thither she prepared to move; but a few weeks' delay was required, owing to the somewhat dilapidated state of the house—it having been untenanted for some time. Accordingly, workmen were sent in, and all that was necessary seemed approaching completion. During this interval, people in the vicinity began to throw out hints about the house—nothing definite, but such as—

"I should not care to live in that house."

(A strong emphasis on "that.")

"Is it haunted?" said my grandmother.

"Oh, no."

"Is there a distinguished ghost?"

"Oh, no—at least, I don't think so."

But that was all my ancestral parent could obtain in the way of information. It was said "strange things" had happened to several families who had lived in it: people lost their memory, or forgot the day, or the month, and made curious mistakes. The house had got an "uncanny" name, which perhaps accounted for its being let at a

lower rent than it would seem to be really worth.

My grandmother laughed at these idle tales, and said she did not fear. Such things only happened to people of lazy habits and indolent temperaments; and as both she and her sister were, if not altogether strong-minded, at least not easily frightened, she felt no further anxiety on the subject, and proceeded with her preparations for moving, and finally settled in the red brick house. She had considerably reduced her establishment; so the family consisted of my grandmother, my mother—then a little girl of twelve (both my uncles being settled in life, one serving with his regiment in the Peninsula), a maiden sister, and two domestics—Sarah, the cook, and Mistress Betty, the factotum, nursemaid, housemaid, lady's-maid, and general tyrant. The household thus literally consisted of females—the men servants having been dispensed with after my grandfather's death.

It was in the autumn that my grandmother took possession of the house, and perfectly satisfied she was with it. In winter it was warm and free from draughts, and, containing all the little et ceteras that people desire in their dwellings, proved a very satisfactory residence; so all rumours faded out of her mind. No ghost appeared; no midnight visitant disturbed the equanimity of the in-dwellers of the red-brick house. Winter budded into spring, spring blossomed into summer, and nothing occurred to decrease my grandmother's satisfaction in the choice of her new abode.

One Friday came, as Fridays have a way of coming towards the end of the week, when my grandmother and great-aunt decided to go into town for a day's shopping. So they went, making a long day of it, and returning rather tired. Before retiring to rest that night, they had a grand council of war with Betty, without whom no family affair ever could be settled. Woe betide any member of the household who dared to overlook Betty's right to be consulted on every point, from a spring cleaning downwards.

The weather was fine, my aunt said, and next morning they would have a clear-starching. Now, a clear-starching was a real business in every respectable family in the early part of the present century, when our ancestresses delighted in ruffles to their elbows, and ruffs to their necks, not to speak of the

responsibility of "getting up" those edificial caps under which they strove to conceal nature's best gift to a woman—a good head of hair. Besides all this, there were those wonderful net or muslin kerchiefs which were so generally affected by the dames of that period. So you will see that a clear-starching was a business not to be lightly undertaken, or without due consideration as regards weather, sunshine, and such necessary adjuncts. It was only done once or twice a year, as in those days, before "Glenfield's Patent" was invented, starch was an expensive commodity. A heavy tax was put on it during the war, when things were at famine prices, to prevent the too rapid consumption of flour, and many cheaper things were used as substitutes by those who who could not make up their minds to do without.

The point of the next day's clear-starching being settled, also the question of some new strings to be put to their Sunday bonnets—or hats, as they were called in those days—my grandmother, her sister, and the rest of the household retired to rest.

The morrow came, and with it the requisite sunshine. So, after breakfast, Mistress Betty descended to the garden to commence operations, my great-aunt intending to overlook and assist her, as ladies of that period were not above seeing after some few of their own concerns. I ought here to say something of my great-aunt, who was the most energetic and active-minded person I ever knew, and who was the presiding genius of my grandmother's household the seventy years of her life; but I must hasten on with my chronicle. When all was put en train below, my great-aunt returned to the drawing-room, where she found my grandmother gazing steadily out of window, and looking rather puzzled.

"I cannot make it out," she said; "but the streets appear so unusually quiet and still—no carts, no carriages, few passers-by; and what there are all walking so gravely."

Presently the bells of the neighbouring church began to ring.

"A fire!" said my great-aunt.

"A funeral!" said her sister.

For this was in the Georgian era, when daily services were ignored, and the rubric a dead letter. Had my beloved ancestresses lived to-day, the church bell on Saturday might not have proved so startling. Presently a family passed by in mourning.

"I knew it was a funeral," said my grandmother, triumphantly.

"A soldier's funeral, then," said my great-aunt, not to be outdone, as a drum was heard, by no means muffled, and some companies of soldiers, headed by their officers, marched past.

At this moment Sarah appeared from the lower regions, with indignation depicted on her countenance.

"Well, ma'am, as never I saw the likes. Here's eleven o'clock, and neither the butcher, nor the baker, nor the grocer has been near us; and this Saturday, too! Them tradespeople is just unbearable—so they are—never to come this morning for the week's orders."

My grandmother, the gentlest of matrons, attempted to mollify her angry cuisinière, and finally persuaded her to issue forth, basket on arm, to see what had become of "them tradespeople."

She returned rather quickly, more irate than ever.

All the shops were shut, and she could get in nowhere; and when she had asked what was the matter, she was only answered by the jeers of the small boys.

"And you must know, ma'am," continued she, "that they said I was no better than a heathen, to be out shopping on a Sunday."

Scarcely had the infuriated Sarah finished her speech, when Betty arrived from the garden, her stout arms much bestarched, "clearing" a lace cap of my grandmother's, with loud claps between her red palms.

"I can't stand it any longer, ma'am," quoth the female Nero. "Mrs. Smith's Mary, next door, has been laughing at me, and saying we are pretty kind of Christians to be working like that on the Sabbath. I gave her as good as I got, though; but Mr. Smith puts his head out of window, and says, 'My good girl, don't be making such a noise there, as the neighbours like their Sunday quiet.'"

My grandmother looked aghast, and let the bonnet, on which she was arranging the new ribbons, fall from her hand.

There was a pretty commotion in that orderly and Sabbatarian household; and it was not until evening they could be quite persuaded of what really was the case—that they had entirely lost Saturday, and that what they thought was a funeral was only the troops from the neighbouring barracks

marching to service along with the respectable folks of the "quartier."

My grandmother felt rather ashamed of the whole transaction; but became less so when, a few weeks afterwards, a friend from a distant county told her that the very same thing had happened to some relations of his, who had occupied the red brick house some years before.

Subsequently, it was found that the much-abused butcher, baker, and grocer had called on the Saturday, but had rung and knocked in vain; and, seeing the smokeless chimneys and closed shutters, had concluded that the family had suddenly gone from home.

Had they all slept, or had they become totally oblivious for thirty-six hours—qui sait? It never was unravelled.

My grandmother lived many years afterwards in the same house, and finally died there; but nothing of the kind ever occurred again. I have often passed the red brick house when a child, but never without calling to mind Mistress Betty's clear starching, and how my grandmother lost a day.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XV.

I WAS startled on hearing this quotation from Béranger, who was a favourite author of mine, and I know my face betrayed me; but I attempted to pass it off.

"Well," I said, "what then?"

"Would you like to know who it was we saw?"

"I am not in the least curious."

"Oh, I dare say not; but what do you think of a certain gentleman named Burra, and a certain Miss—"

"Silence!" I exclaimed, so energetically that Paddles was startled.

"I didn't mean—" he began.

"How could you have seen us—I mean me—that is to say, them—" I went on, getting more and more confused; for I was uncertain whether he was sounding me, or whether we had really been overlooked.

It was then Paddles' turn to look confused.

"I was only joking, Burra," he said, moving away from me.

"Come," I exclaimed, catching hold of

him by the arm, "this won't do, Reynolds. You must and shall tell me what you know."

"Must and shall are hard words, Cochrane, from one man to another."

"I beg your pardon," I said, tightening my grasp on his arm, which he tried to draw away from me; "but I appeal to you, as a gentleman, to explain yourself."

"It wasn't my fault, Cochrane—it was not, upon my word. Let me go, and I'll tell you."

"You want to give me the slip?"

"Honour bright."

"Very well," I replied, releasing him. "Now for it."

"By jingo!" he exclaimed, rubbing his arm, "you have a grip like a vice. I'll take care to keep out of your reach in future, mate, when you're put out."

They all knew at the Hospital how I disliked the word "mate," and it was, consequently, often made use of by the fellows when they wanted to tease or annoy me.

"Never mind," I said—"go on."

"Well," he began in an apologetic tone, "Bull and I were out for a walk last night, and at Rathfarnham Bridge we caught sight of you and a girl—I beg your pardon, a young lady—" he hesitated.

"Well? Go on."

"Well, Bull said, 'By Jove! here's a lark! Who'd ever have thought to see Cochrane'—he said 'St. Cochrane,' you know—'taking up with the petticoats like any sinner among us all? Come on, Paddles, let's follow them and see the sport.'"

"And you were mean enough to sneak after us, Reynolds! I thought better of you. Bull is capable of any mean action."

"I am very sorry, Cochrane," he continued, in a penitent tone of voice—"very sorry and ashamed of myself. It was a mean thing to do, I admit; but I only thought of the fun of the thing at the time. I really beg your pardon."

"Go on."

"Well, we followed you—not near enough to hear what you said—until we saw you sit down on that bench—" he hesitated again.

"Go on," I said, and he continued:

"Bull then proposed that we should get into the field, and creep on behind the wall, until we got close to you. We did so, and I am sorry and ashamed to confess that we heard every word you said."

The last item of disagreeable intelligence he added with a smirk and a leer that so

enraged me, I felt sorely tempted to pitch him into the river that ran along by our side; but, by a violent effort, I restrained myself, and motioned him to proceed.

"We heard every word you said," he repeated.

"You heard nothing wrong," I exclaimed, provoked beyond endurance; and, seizing him by the collar of his coat, I shook him as a terrier might a rat.

"Drop that!" he cried. "I swear it was all fair and square and above board. Let me go."

I released him.

"Go on."

"There's not much more to tell," he continued, keeping his distance. "We followed you until we saw you go into M'Lachlan's place. That's how we came to guess who she was."

"Very well," I said—"that will do."

"Good morning, Cochrane."

"Good morning," I replied.

And the fellow scuttled away like a beaten dog.

I was terribly put out, but there was no help for what had occurred.

It was ten minutes past twelve when I reached Clonskeagh.

Mrs. Mackey, the gardener's wife, who was also the lodge-keeper, made me a much deeper curtsy than usual as she opened the gate.

"I hope I see you well, sir."

"Quite well, thank you," I replied, and walked on towards the house.

The door was opened for me by Janet, a very unusual office for that distinguished personage to perform.

"Is your mistress at home, Janet?"

"Aye. Come ben, Mr. Cochrane—she's expectin' o' ye in the bodwar."

Into that cosy little apartment, which I was then privileged to enter for the first time, I followed my guide, with beating heart, and found—my mother-in-law, I was about to say—Mrs. M'Lachlan, occupied with some Berlin wool-work, and alone.

I had feared that Miss Marshall might be with her; but, happily, this was not the case. She stood up as I entered, and, with a smile on her face, held out her hand; and when I had given her mine, pressed it cordially.

I took courage.

"I have taken a very bold step, Mrs. M'Lachlan," I began. "Doubtless I ought

to have spoken to you or Mr. M'Lachlan first; but I was completely carried away by the force of circumstances last night. I presume—Emma—has told you all?"

It was very unkind of the lady, I thought, not to help out my stuttering confession with a single word; but she merely smiled and remained silent.

After waiting a few moments, which to me seemed hours, I repeated my question:

"I presume—Mrs. M'Lachlan—Emma—has told you all?"

"Yes," at length replied the lady, "she has. And before we go a step farther in the matter, you must faithfully promise me one thing."

"I will."

"Very well. You may think the condition a hard one, I dare say; but with me—with us—it is indispensable."

I felt powerless to utter a word.

"It is this," continued Mrs. M'Lachlan, evidently commiserating my confusion, for she spoke in the kindest manner—"that you will never, without our express consent, take Emma away to Australia."

I sighed a sigh of intense relief. Was that all?

"I promise."

"I expected no less from you," said the lady.

I felt myself growing bolder every moment.

"Since my dear father's death," I explained, "as I told Emma last night, there is absolutely no tie that binds me to my native land; and though I will not attempt to deny that I am deeply attached to it, the love I bear Australia is as nothing compared with my affection for Emma. Having to choose between the two, I cannot, do not hesitate one moment."

"I expected no less," again smilingly approved the lady.

"With regard to my means, Mrs. M'Lachlan," I continued, "they will appear to you most miserably small; but when I get a dispensary, which I have now made up my mind to seriously seek for, they will exceed three hundred a year—upon which, in the country, we shall be able to live very comfortably; and, in time, I hope to increase them materially by private practice."

"Yes," replied Mrs. M'Lachlan. "We began life on far less. But I must tell you one thing: Emma will have no fortune—at present, at least."

"Believe me," I exclaimed, "such a thing never entered my head."

"I quite believe you," replied my future mother, as I must now call her. "But I may as well explain—knowing, of course, that what I confide to you will go no farther—that Mr. M'Lachlan's resources are not nearly so great as, from our style of living here, you might have supposed. Indeed, it is quite against my advice we live as we do at present; for he has sustained severe losses recently through the dishonesty of a late partner; and this place has been to him, and still is, a source of great expense, which I cannot persuade him to curtail."

Mrs. M'Lachlan paused; and, not knowing exactly what to say, I availed myself of the equivocal interjection "Oh!" which I permitted her to interpret in any sense she pleased.

She continued:

"We talked this matter over carefully, in all its bearings, last night, Mr. M'Lachlan and myself; and all I have said to you now, and have yet to say, has his sanction and approval."

I bowed.

Mrs. M'Lachlan continued:

"We shall have to make Robert an allowance of a hundred and fifty pounds a year when he goes into the army; and we purpose doing the same with Emma: that, with your resources, will enable you to keep up an appearance in the country consistent with your position. What we might ultimately be enabled to do further, I am not at present in a position to say."

"Mrs. M'Lachlan," I exclaimed, "I should really much prefer your leaving us to manage by ourselves. We talked it all over last evening, too, as well as you did, and Emma was of opinion that we should get on famously."

"Dear girl!" approvingly exclaimed the mother, although not without a sigh, which she tried in vain to stifle in its birth. "I must now refer you to my husband. You can speak freely to him after dinner, Tom."

She had slightly hesitated before calling me by my given name, which sounded deliciously in my ears—although one of the very ugliest in existence—coming from the lips of Emma's mother.

"Now," she continued, rising, "I think we understand each other. I will send

Emma in to you. Of course you will spend the day with us."

I felt too happy to speak. We shook hands again.

"God bless you!" exclaimed my new mother, and I was left alone—but not for long.

In a few minutes the door was opened, and Emma came in, the incarnation of girlish beauty in her blushes.

Time must have glided rapidly away, for suddenly the luncheon bell rang, and good-natured Mrs. M'Lachlan tapped at the boudoir door before coming in, so that we were the very pink of propriety, sitting at least three feet apart, when she appeared.

"You have been very quiet, young people," she said, smiling. "I thought I would come myself to tell you lunch was ready."

"I am afraid to face Miss Marshall, mamma, dear."

"Nonsense, my love."

"Oh, mamma, I dare not—she is so very satirical."

"Nonsense, Sissy. Come."

"I had really rather not."

"Well, Tom, you'll come with me?"

Again the slight hesitation before uttering my name.

"I would prefer to stay with Emma."

"Nonsense; you have had enough of billing and cooing for one morning, I should think. I insist upon your coming. It is the last time, too, you will sit down with poor Bob for months."

The maternal eyes filled with tears, which overflowed their sources, and coursed rapidly down her cheeks, at thought of the impending separation.

"Cheer up, mamma," exclaimed her daughter. "I declare I am very selfish; but we have been so happy!"

How beautifully she blushed, and how well her confusion became her!

Emma took her mother's arm, and beckoned me to follow.

Miss Marshall was in the dining-room when we entered. She was painfully gushing in her manner to my darling, and most obligingly condescending—I had almost said patronizing—to poor me.

I could perceive, however, that in the depths of her heart she was jealous of her former pupil—not on my account, be it understood; for it would have been all the same whoever had been the favoured lover,

or prétendu, as she persisted in speaking of me to Emma.

No, she was not jealous of me, or on my account; but, as Bob expressed it, she was "awfully riled" at seeing another added to the too long list of her juniors who had outstripped her in the matrimonial race.

"What a lucky young gentleman you are, Mr. Cochrane," she took occasion to whisper to me during the course of the afternoon.

I bowed.

"Such a fortune!" she continued, trying to look sly. "Oh, you knew what you were about."

"Miss Marshall," I exclaimed, aghast at her insinuation, "I beg you will understand—"

"Not so loud," she said, in a low and warning tone, with her finger on her lip—"they will hear us;" indicating Emma and her mother by a slight movement of her chin in their direction. "But I can keep a secret."

Was it worth my while undeceiving her? I concluded that it was not.

Soon afterwards Bob had to leave us, in order to prepare for his journey to London, whither he was to proceed by the evening mail packet; and, in consequence, the dinner was put off until a quarter to eight.

His mother and sister wished to accompany him to the steamer, or at least to Westland-row; but this Bob, who declared he hated "scenes," would not hear of, on any account.

His father was to meet us at the station; and he and I were to go with Bob to Kingstown, and see him fairly and safely off.

I had forgotten to mention that, at the first favourable opportunity after I had appeared before him in the novel, and to him greatly desired, character of an affianced brother, Bob had hugged me, as once previously, in the exuberance of his spirits, he had done in the conservatory, when I first made confession of my love for Emma.

Dear Bob! I scarcely think ever two men were more thoroughly attached, notwithstanding the difference between our ages, than he and I.

I felt attracted towards, or fascinated by, Charles Woodward, in some mysterious manner, which I never could account for or explain away; and, while I shrank from him, was powerless to break off the intimacy

which, almost directly after our first meeting, sprang up between us; but Robert M'Lachlan I loved like a brother.

We saw him off, his father and I, and returned together to The Grove.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL the way from Kingstown to The Grove, Mr. M'Lachlan scarcely opened his lips, but continued to sigh heavily at intervals, which I attributed to the recent parting with his son.

It was just the same during dinner: a gloom sat upon us all.

One or two attempts at conversation made by Miss Marshall—with the most laudable intentions, I have no doubt—resulted in disastrous failure and her own discomfort.

When the ladies had retired, I noticed with regret that my prospective father-in-law poured out, and hastily swallowed, several glasses of his oldest port, in rapid succession—without, however, the potent fluid producing much visible effect.

I felt very uncomfortable, but feared to speak; and, after a short time, got up with the intention of joining the ladies in the drawing-room.

"Sit still a moment, Tom," exclaimed Mr. M'Lachlan, for the first time calling me by my baptismal name. "I have a deal to talk to you about."

I resumed my seat, and assumed a listening attitude.

He poured himself out yet another glass, and tossed it off, and began:

"Tom—as I must henceforth call you—had anybody told me, six months ago, that I could have acquiesced, not of necessity, but willingly, not to say thankfully, in the events of last evening, I would have called him a fool; and had he repeated the assertion, in all probability, I would have knocked him down; and yet he would have been right, and I most confoundedly in the wrong."

Mr. M'Lachlan paused, and looked steadfastly across the table at me. The expression of his face was so wild and strange, I feared to irritate him by staring at him, and turned my eyes away.

Presently he spoke again:

"Yes, it is very true: no one can tell what a day may bring forth—no one in business, at all events. I had always intended my daughter for a title."

I started; but he motioned me to be silent, and continued:

"But that ambitious scheme I have been compelled to relinquish; and, doubtless, it is all for the best."

He drank yet another glass, and went on:

"Yes, that little dream, like so many others of mine, has ended in smoke; and I am glad to put up with what, a short time since, I should have called a pauper."

"Mr. M'Lachlan—"

"Hold your tongue," he commanded, "and hear me out. My wife has told me all—ah, she has been a helpmeet, indeed! and it would have been better for me, better for us all, if I had hearkened to her more than I have done; but that is past and gone—she has told me all; and I desired her to give you the answer you have had."

"I am very—"

"Not a word till I have done. There is one point, however, upon which I desire there shall be no doubt in your mind. It is this: my wife, I presume, told you that it was my intention to allow you a hundred and fifty a year?"

"She did; but—"

"Don't count on it," he continued, unheeding my interruption. "I may or I may not. She doesn't know all, nor do I, yet. Time will tell. The suggestion was hers, and I acquiesced, seemingly—for the time had not arrived for an explanation between us. Therefore, I repeat, don't reckon on it—I may or I may not."

"Mr. M'Lachlan, I assure you, I would much rather—"

"One moment," he exclaimed—"I have not done yet. You have enough to live on, independent of your profession—which, of course, in time will bring you in more; and that is the reason I have given my consent to this affair. A drowning man will catch at a straw; and, by my faith, I fear—"

He paused, struck his fist forcibly on the table, making the glasses and decanters ring again, and burst into a loud but forced and, to me, most distressing laugh.

"My dear sir," I said, "although I love Emma with my whole heart, I must not take her from you against your will—"

"Ha!" he shouted—"you want to back out of it, do you, now you find she is to have no fortune? Do so, and destroy my last faith in human nature."

"I assure you—" I began.

"Swear it!" he exclaimed, in the greatest

excitement. "Swear to me you love the girl, and are not prompted in this matter by mercenary motives—swear it, or leave this room and house for ever!"

"Mr. M'Lachlan—"

"Swear it, sir—swear it!"

He was getting more and more excited, and I feared the servants would hear him.

"I do swear it," I said, solemnly. "I love her with all my heart and soul, and for herself only."

"That will do, Tom—give me your hand. Thank Heaven, you are an honest man; and, if I can at all manage it, you shall be no loser by this."

"Sir," I exclaimed, with all the dignity at my command, "I insist upon a full understanding with you on this point. I have sworn; and under no circumstances shall I ever take money, or any equivalent for money, from you with my wife."

"Tom!" he exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "give me your hand. I admire you, Tom—I respect you—I am proud of you." Then, as if a sudden thought had struck him—"Me proud!—Sandy M'Lachlan proud! Guid guide us!"

And the poor man smote his broad forehead with his open palm so forcibly as to leave a red mark on the smooth white skin which lasted for several minutes.

Was he mad? Alas, no; more probably drunk.

Subsequent events, however, have induced me to alter my opinion, and believe that my first hypothesis was the more correct.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

INSPECTING STABLES.

WHEN I was a very little boy, I dwelt in Pimlico; and in those days a special trip was made every morning by your humble servant and his guardian Peggotty to the Royal mews. We did not go alone, but were the bearers of what seemed to me in those days the biggest blue jug possible. I have since then come to the conclusion that the said jug held about two quarts; but it seemed to my young imagination a very tun of Heidelberg in its vastness. I said that we were the bearers; that was wrong—my Peggotty was the bearer, and I assisted by holding very tightly to her hand as we entered the gateway and passed that portentous-looking man in scarlet—a second or third coachman, I believe him to have

been; but there was a misty confusion in my budding mind, and I don't think that I ever settled quite to my satisfaction as to whether he was the King who belonged to the mews—William the Fourth, of pious memory—or the Jack of Hearts, whose album portrait I had at home in the worn old pack of cards wherewith I played at beggar my neighbour, built houses, or manufactured pancakes.

That mews seemed a formidable place; and I was filled with awe as we made our way under arches to where, in a subdued gloom, stood a huge ghostly-looking pump, a great iron machine, with a wicked-looking spout and a knob awry. Its handle was long and grim, and the weighted end always looked like an instrument of torture. There was a chain attached too, somewhere; and when the pump handle was lifted and drawn down, that pump made a horrible noise in its interior which made my young hair to stand on end; and but that I was drawn to it, fascinated as it were by the great weird machine, I should have shrieked and fled away. As it was, I stood still—nay, trembling—while Susan placed the big blue jug on two stones beneath the spout, and lifted the great arm with a huge creak and groan. Then down it came, and the water used to slobber and fly all over the sides, splashing my little bare legs and prunella shoes—yes, prunella shoes, I remember the name perfectly, and that they were bought in Arabella-row; the two words forming a memoria technica style of fixing names that came naturally to me. At the time present, one is set wondering what prunella may be, and whether it has anything to do with plums.

Splash used that water to come down, and spitefully sprinkle my legs; but I dared not run. There was one particular knob on that pump that always stared hard at me, and said, as plainly as looks could say, "You move if you dare!" So I did not move; but, perforce, stood still and was splashed.

Why, that weird pump was a very torture to me; but I felt obliged to go and see it every morning when it was fine; and somehow it is mixed up with salts and senna, going to sleep in the dark, and old bogey in the coal-cellar—all dire horrors which combined to make miserable my young life. But that water had to be fetched for special drinking purposes, since it was cool and bright, pure and

sparkling; and in those days there had been no public chemical analyses to taboo those clear, bright pump waters, and declare them impregnated with divers diabolical salts. I say in those days, for waterwork companies were not then in their present state: there were oil lamps in the suburban roads, Vauxhall came out with ten thousand additional lamps every fête day, and the soldiers in the parks shouldered flint-locked Brown Bess.

Thinking about the old pump and the oft-repeated journey, I strayed the other day through the gateway, was taken in charge by a Royal groom, and shown through the stabling and coach-houses appertaining to Royalty in town. The first part of my visit was far from interesting; for though the ranges of stabling were extensive, they were not clean—that is to say, in paint or colouring. As far as groom-work would go, they were perfection. Straw, sand—the former plaited, the latter sifted and strewn—both were the acme of neatness. Then, there were the horses—good, well-bred bays, well-matched and of goodly size; but so far, save in quantity, nothing to equal the stabling of most of our gentry who take pride in having a grand turn-out for the park during the season.

But these stables and these horses were not what we had come to see. They were very good no doubt, but there was nothing regal in their looks; so we waited patiently, going through the general routine of being shown through, before passing down one side of a large quadrangle, and being asked into a great lofty stable, with twelve stalls a-side.

This was the place then, at last! Here were all the King's horses—I mean the Queen's; and on running my eye down the tail-bordered avenue, it was to see that there were ten creams on one side, and nine blacks on the other.

There is not much romance in a horse in a stall, standing munching, with a halter round his neck; and though we were in the Royal stables, looking at the Royal horses, of historical breed, and our mind ought to have associated them with glorious State pageants of the past, with gorgeous trappings, silver trumpets and kettledrums, cheering mobs, bowing regal heads, Life Guards, firing guns, and clanging bells, in its vile obstinacy it dashed off like a donkey or pig-like mind as it is, and on seeing the ten creams, vividly suggested "The Procession, headed by the

great Dragon Car, will enter the town at one precisely—performance at two; Señor Tito Flesheeno, three bare-backed steeds, scenes in the arena," &c., &c. And then upon turning, in disgust with one's irreverent mind, to the long swish-tailed blacks, if it did not draw a gloomy picture of hearses, with nodding plumes, and seem to say "Funerals performed"!

Well, upon further consideration, it is impossible to blame one's mind, for the unfortunate horses suggest these fancies. They are great, showy, sluggish-looking beasts, that bear a striking resemblance to the war steed of the equestrian statue, crossed and improved into a good dray horse; or, in the case of the blacks, bred to arched neck and long mane and tail for undertakers' purposes. Their limbs seem to have grown into an amble, and their necks arch as if a groom had always held them by the bit. They have, however, a fine gentlemanly, old school aspect about them—the genuine ornamental and not useful aspect; but judging from their nature, their little work, and their groom-led exercise, they must be carefully kept down in their corn.

Satisfied with the pale, wall-eyed creams, each of which seemed to give a dull, despairing glare at me, as if to say, "Do take us out for a good lopping gallop in some green field," we went next to the State harness-room—a great, handsome building, lined with sets of harness, and having horses bearing other sets down the middle; but no flesh and blood horses these, only wooden supporters on wheels.

We are first shown the old State harness—black morocco leather, where leather is to be seen, for it is thickly crusted over with massive gilt ornaments. This was made for the blacks and creams; but, some fifteen years or so since a new set was provided for State occasions. Scarlet morocco leather this, crusted with ornaments wherever the Royal insignia could be placed. Precisely the same pattern this as the old harness, and rich in gilding; while every set must be a fair load for the horse it is used to dress. However, the poor beasts need not be pitied, for it is but seldom that they are required to exert themselves upon any important occasion; and this visit of the Shah must have been an equine blessing in disguise, to save the regal animals from fits of apoplexy.

Here we have next the second best harness, used for semi-state, as when her Ma-

jesty went to St. Paul's last year. Black leather this, with brass coats of arms and embellishments, all glistening as bright as burnishing will make them, and in their elegance quite outvying the gorgeous gilt and morocco of the State trappings.

Then there is harness of a third degree of excellence, making a fourth best set, or rather regiment, of sets of harness. Very elegant, too, this last, and used for the private carriage work of the Royal family. No light task to keep all clean; for though not one tithe of the trappings is in use, yet our lovely climate is a sworn foe of leather and brass, and insidiously sets to work with mildew and tarnish, to counteract which endless polishing, care, and artificial heat are necessary.

But we have not yet seen all the contents of the place; for here are the handsome bits of twisted steel, the brass-bound saddles, with their chased brass stirrups for the Royal postboys. There is an end, though, even to harness, and our conductor is quite willing to hand us over to the care of another guide, inasmuch as we have not been sufficiently impressed with all he has shown.

Our new guide is the carriage man, and shows the State carriages—ten—half coaches of the old pattern, and half landaus, with the clumsy old contrivances for turning back their leather heads, and making them open carriages for the time. They are gay without with brass-work, though sober in their hue, saving the wheels, which are of scarlet, while the hammer-cloths, where sits the coachman, are of purple and scarlet, with broad gold fringe—no, it is only yellow silk, and, like the rest, looks best at a distance. In fact, but for the handsome purple silk lining of these vehicles for the Royal family, one would be tempted to say that they are rather a showy, shabby lot, and would not fetch very heavy sums if brought to the hammer.

What then shall we say to this for a Royal coach—this State affair, made over one hundred years ago, for George the Third. Seven thousand pounds it cost in designing, and making, and panel painting; and there it is, a great lumbering, mouldy old show, with heavy carved wheels, inelegant body, huge leather braces, and great antiquated, jerky springs. There are Britannia, and Neptune, and Amphitrite, and sea gods and goddesses, neatly clothed in sea foam; Roman helmets, and Cupids. Four tons does it weigh, and

when the great triumphal car is set in motion its six-foot-high wheels slowly revolve, with the great creaking body swinging and swaying between them. The interior is lined with velvet, faded with time, but displaying the Garter in its design. The hammer-cloth, too, looks sadly tarnished; but it has a better one for its "Sunday best."

Poor old coach! what a history it seems to hold shut inside; and what changes have taken place since George Rex's pig-tailed head was gazing from its windows upon admiring crowds! It is very big and cumbersome, very ugly too, and absurd; but its grotesque aspect is seldom seen, and though in these modern days of advanced thought there are plenty who pooh-pooh the idea of State pageantry and show, it is a mistake that there is not more of it. That a little State display is admired by the many-headed is amply shown by the thousands that line the way whenever Royalty is announced for a visit; and simple as the idea may be, those thousands would gladly see the show more gay.

"Humph!" says some one, "I suppose you'd have the Queen come out in crown and Royal robes."

Well, I don't know but what I'd go as far as that occasionally, absurd as it may be thought. The vulgar mind will associate regality with show, and likes plenty made. Your prince gets over his difficulty with the mob by appearing in different uniforms; but your Queen—well, she is dressed as a quiet-looking lady will dress; and Mob will look a bit disappointed, although he has cheered her with all his heart.

However, be that as it may, a return to some of the old processions would do far more towards breeding content than the removal of a halfpenny from where it has stuck for years as a tax upon some article of import. To such a non-holiday-making people as we are, every atom of show comes like so much sunshine—artificial sunshine—in a climate where the sun god seldom shows. Your cynic will say that it is tomfoolery: perhaps it is, but there are times when even tomfoolery is pleasant; and there is really among us an excess of work. There are the trappings, let us have them shown as often as you will; and depend upon it, there are always thousands ready to see, and send up a shout—a right loyal one, too—for the coming of the blacks and the long-tailed creams.

SMUT'S DEATH.

SMUT was a cat, and a most remarkable one—not that he possessed any feline peculiarity not enjoyed by other members of his race, but remarkable for the luck which invariably attended him when face to face with death. He may have had the proverbial nine lives assigned to a cat, or he may not; but one thing is certain—that from kittenhood to the day of his death he was continually getting into scrapes, both by land and sea, and as certainly emerging scatheless from the fray, till the fatal occurrence which heads my narrative.

In the first place, he had the impudence to make his débüt on the stage of feline existence in a Dolly Varden hat belonging to my sister—a young lady who, I am sorry to say, is not gifted with the best of tempers; and Smut—with his brothers and sisters and the parent, who purred her admiration over her luckless brood—was ignominiously consigned to the region of the coal-cellar, where, from his sable hue, he could not be distinguished from the surrounding mineral; and the result was that the servant, on going for some fuel, trod on him. He was immediately picked up by the domestic, and pronounced to be "crunched to bits." But not so, however; for the care which my repentant sister bestowed on him proved him to be sound both in limb and body, though his restoration to favour proved fatal to the remainder of the litter—they being, one and all, consigned to the depths of a bucket of water, while Smut was allowed to breathe, and get through his nine lives after the manner of cats in general and black ones in particular.

No sooner had he opened his eyes on the world and society, than his playful freaks were resented as insulting to the dignity of a staid old Scotch terrier belonging to myself, who usually shared the hearthrug with Smut's aged parent.

The pair would sit winking and blinking together, hour after hour, much too well bred to indulge in any such unruly escapades as romping, or furtively snatching at each other's tails; and on the occasion of Snap's caudal extremity being made free with by Smut, the luckless offender was seized, and shaken like a rat; and, but for my timely intervention, would most assuredly have mewed his last.

To prevent a repetition of Snap's sum-

mary vengeance, Smut and his mother were conveyed to a lumber-room at the top of the house, where they were left in fancied security; but on my visiting the pair before retiring to bed, Smut popped out on to the landing as I opened the door, and fell through the banister-rails on to the stairs below—a depth of some fifteen feet or so—giving the lie to the old adage by falling plump on his little head.

When I reached him he seemed dazed a little, but was not long in recovering consciousness, and looked round him in bewilderment, as though wondering what had happened.

I will not weary the reader with any further mishap which attended poor Smut whilst a “land lubber;” but some three months afterwards I carried him on board H.M.S. Blank, which vessel I had joined as an officer, and which was then lying at Deptford, taking in stores for a foreign station.

I pass over Smut's reception on board, and subsequent hair-breadth escapes previous to the vessel being “swung” at Greenhithe, where, I may add, puss narrowly escaped swinging too; for, getting into a coil of rope that was rapidly running out, he was nearly strangled by the flying coils getting round his neck and sending him whirling into the air, whence he made his descent down a windsail, to the surprise and consternation of those who happened to be below. Smut soon became the pet of all hands, fore and aft, and woe betide the luckless individual who should dare to stroke puss the wrong way of his coat.

I must hasten, however, to the final catastrophe which cost poor Smut his life, and will only relate one little incident on the voyage. We were in the Bay of Biscay, and becalmed; but as everybody who has crossed the Atlantic knows, there is always a ground swell in this part of the ocean, causing vessels to rock from side to side with sudden jerks, quite different from the graceful, undulating motion when under canvas, with a steady breeze on the quarter.

The sails were not furled, but simply “scandalized,” and waiting to catch any breath of wind that might chance to spring up; and Smut had mounted into the main-sail boom, along which he was feeling his way very gingerly, when, just as he had reached the end, a sudden lurch of the vessel sent him flying overboard.

The captain, a most humane man, with whom Smut was a great favourite, witnessed the disaster, and threw over a life-buoy. Smut speedily availed himself of the timely aid, and was soon safely on deck again, a wiser and a more cautious cat, for he never afterwards mounted a spar.

We were bound for Rio de Janeiro, at which port we arrived in safety, and discharged our cargo; and it was on the morning previous to taking in odd stores for the voyage home that Smut was missing. We searched fore and aft, but “Puss, puss, tit, tit,” &c., was called in vain. No Smut replied to the endearing epithets uttered time after time, and he was given up for lost. One supposed this thing, another that, and all agreed that he must have found his way overboard and perished; and breakfast was gone through without the customary allowance of milk being lapped by Smut. The first barge of lumber had arrived alongside, and “Bearskin,” an old boatswain's mate, had gone below into the hold to aid in the stowage, when soon his voice was heard calling to those above to come below, and in tones that left no doubt as to something important having been discovered. I was the first to descend and behold my lost pet. He had found his way into the hold overnight, some supposed over the water-tanks, but most likely, I think, he had fallen down the open hatchway above, which would just have been his luck; anyhow, there he was—dead, and fearfully mangled and torn, but not alone, for he had had a battle with the rats, ten of which lay lifeless around him, affording ample evidence of the terrible battle he had fought, and the dear manner in which he had sold his nine lives. Thus perished the pet of the ship; and there are many of my then companions who, when they read this, will mayhap give, as I do now, a sigh to the memory of poor Smut.

TABLE TALK.

I ONLY want to know, you know—I ask no further question, I make no comments, merely placing the two following statements before the readers of ONCE A WEEK. Tea is now being advertised largely, and sold in London at one shilling and threepence per pound: statement the first. A short time since, Dr. Letheby reports in the *Times* that, in one thousand chests of tea lately im-

ported, an agreeable little addition had been made of from forty to forty-three per cent. of iron filings, and nineteen per cent. of sand. Forty per cent. of foreign material in the shape of tea leaf, and sixty per cent. of *very* foreign material in the shape of rubbish: statement the second. Let the reader draw his—or her—own deductions, and then buy cheap tea if he dare.

“COME ALONG O’ me, and I’ll stand two hices.” The speaker seemed to be about eleven, and the speakee bordering on ten. Scene: Goswell-street on a sunny day. The young gentlemen were very dirty—very Arabian—and evidently lived and dressed irregularly; but—think of it, ye fashionable ones, who play with a Neapolitan, a vanille, or a lemon ice, and crumble up a wafer therewith—think of it: these street boys take their “hice” as a regular thing, even as of old we, of a generation or two earlier, purchased parliament and brandy balls. Street ice-sellers are now at almost every corner, ready to fill a shallow glass with the pink or yellow frigorific—price one half-penny. Italians these dealers seem to be, as a rule, and a brisk trade they do. But don’t—take good advice—don’t stop to see these ices eaten: you might repent. I do not allude to the dirty aspect of glass or dealer; neither do I try to analyze the constituents of the cooling speise, or condemn the dirty buyer. I merely hint that, as aforesaid, the glasses are very shallow, and that the signor who presides at the barrow does not supply his customers with spoons.

A CORRESPONDENT writes:—“At the Freshwater end of the Isle of Wight, the common people have a strange way—perplexing until one knows it—of pronouncing their o’s and a’s; for instance, they call a wardrobe a *wurdrobe* or *werdrobe*. I remember one night that some of us young people were sitting over the fire at Admiral —’s, telling ghost stories, and feeling decidedly nervous thereat, when a lugubrious looking servant came up to me, and said in a solemn tone, ‘Sir, your *hearse* is at the door.’ ‘Bless my soul!’ said I, appalled, ‘what do you mean?’ And then suddenly remembering the local peculiarity of pronunciation, said ‘Good night,’ and mounted my horse.”

A FRIEND PROPOSES to have a brass plate

upon his door as a notice to callers whom he does not wish to see, and upon it intends to inscribe the two words “LEGGARS BEWARE.” He says that will be sufficient; it will insult the big beggars who call for subscriptions, and frighten the small away. It is not to be wondered at, for he is most terribly pestered; and but for the knowledge that other people suffer as well—or as ill—he would think that the ingenious made a dead set against his special home. He says he does not like being fetched out of his study to see Mr. Walker, who has called on business, the business being to sell him the recipe of a celebrated polish, the present being the last opportunity of obtaining it, as the proprietor sails next week for the far West or East. He was rude enough to refuse to buy, even though the efficacy of the polish was shown upon his hall table; and the very next hour actually declined to subscribe to the volunteer fire brigade, upon the plea that he always made a practice of putting his own fires out. A mistake this last, for he must run risks of conflagration like other people, if only by burning the circulars he receives.

THE GENTLEMAN who makes the genuine Russian cigarettes is in trouble. Rascals have been trading upon his popularity, so he has issued a circular from his chief manufactory, and translated it into English for the benefit of his customers. Here are some extracts:—“This people went so far as to get themselves baptised by the name ‘La Ferme,’ so as to deceive the authorities by falsificated passports. From this day henceforth there shall not be forwarded from my manufacture no articles which do not bear the name of my registered firm. The public is by this means perfectly in the position, immediately to distinguish the genuine articles from the counterfeits.” It is almost too bad of our ill-used dealer, though, to “falsificate” and “counterfeit” our language to this extent.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

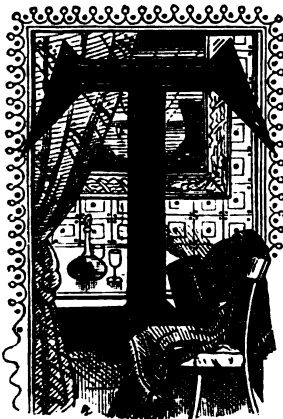
No. 291.

July 26, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER IX.
FINDING A HAVEN.



THE library door was not closed before James had seen and heard enough to make him go downstairs and declare to his sleepy fellow-servant in the hall that there was "about a rum a start

upstairs as ever *he* knew on." For Grosvenor-square is not at all a romantic place, either in or out of the season. Mysteries do not often come under the notice of the attendants at the great mansions; for matters, as a rule, go on in as regular a beat as that of the policeman who occasionally turns the light of his bull's-eye down the various areas, of course to see that no burglarious attempts are being made to reach the plate chests of the vicinity, as the tradespeople call it in their circulars; though it is quite within the range of probability that "the stern myrmidon of the law" (see report in *North-Western News*) is just as often thinking of surreptitious visitors to the maidens of the house as of the Hall-marked forks and spoons reclining in their green baize beds.

James's fellow-servant gave utterance to something that was destroyed in its articulateness by a yawn, and then helped himself to another horn of ale, hardly attending to the history of the "rum start" upstairs,

though even he allowed that the proceedings were very strange.

For before the door closed Louis Rivière had stepped forward, caught Lady Lawler's hand in both of his, and kissed it again and again, before seizing Sir Richard's, and treating his in the same fashion. In fact, but for a retrograde motion on the part of the baronet, the visitor would have caught him in his arms, and kissed him on both cheeks; and it was with a sigh of relief that he felt the continental salute fall upon extremities easily afterwards immersed in a basin of water.

"You here, Monsieur Rivière!" exclaimed Lady Lawler; while Sir Richard remained perfectly silent, not even offering a chair to his visitors.

"Oui, miladi—I am here at last. But my wife here, poor child, she is fainting. We have journeyed long. We have not eaten this day. A glass of water—a piece of bread!"

As he spoke he darted back to his companion, who stood motionless, closely muffled, and leaning against the table. With all a foreigner's demonstrativeness, he took her to his heart, fondling her as if she were a weary child; and then, asking consent with his eyes, he led her to an easy chair, where she lay back, cold and exhausted with her journey.

Whatever may have been the thoughts of Sir Richard Lawler, the sight of the pale, haggard woman, whose great eyes seemed to glare appealingly, brought him to himself in an instant. Before Lady Lawler could reach her side, Sir Richard had left the room, returning soon with wine and glasses, which he brought in himself, much to the disgust of James, who was eager to see what was going on in what he termed the "libery." But, upon this occasion, he had not so much as a glance through the crack of the door; and he descended, vowing that, if there was much more "of this here sorter thing going

on in the house, he knew jolly well what he should do. He wasn't going to be kept out of his bed all night because of that little Frenchman."

Very excusable this, for James was tired. He took no interest in the fresh visitors, who were very shabby, and not likely to allay the itching of his palm; and, lastly, he had been made not only to smart from a blow, but to awaken to the fact that there was a hated rival in his path.

In the meantime, Sir Richard Lawler, with all a gentleman's hospitality, was doing his best to set his visitors at their ease. At first, bitter recollections of the past had flashed through his mind, bringing up Rivière's openly displayed admiration for La Belle Anglaise, and his wife's rather frivolous conduct; but the knowledge of the misery through which the refugees had passed, and the sight of their helplessness and distress as they silently appealed to him for his aid, awoke all the better feelings of his nature. Driving all ungenerous thoughts away, he vied with his wife in his attentions to the half-fainting woman in the chair.

In spite of her suffering and weakness, Madame Rivière had at first shrunk from Lady Lawler; but the tender earnestness with which the Englishwoman ministered to her soon won upon her impulsive nature, and in a short time her arms were wildly flung round her hostess, and she was weeping hysterically upon her bosom.

"Weep—it will relieve," said Rivière, in a voice of ineffable tenderness. "Pauvre enfant!—what she has suffered!" and he laid his hand reverently upon the dishevelled head of his wife; while Sir Richard walked softly up and down the room, pretending to whistle, but all the while crying indirectly—that is to say, through the nose.

CHAPTER X.

BEATING THE BARS.

THE house in Grosvenor-square was very silent, for at last the servants were dismissed. The tiny bell in the great bronze clock over the fireplace had chimed out the half-hour after two, but there were still three occupants of the library. Lady Lawler had just returned from seeing, with all a sister's kindness, her visitor to the room that had been made ready, and now stood leaning upon her husband's shoulder, as Rivière once more reverently crossed to where she stood, and raised and kissed her hand.

"But you have been good to my poor Marie," he said, softly. "Is it that you English are all angels, and we French but fiends? Look you, I cross our land hunted. They would have killed me. I dared not stay. And for what? What had I done? But I reach the sea with Marie, and we cross, and at last crawl here lest we should die of hunger; and you treat us—ah, mon Dieu!"

He kissed the tips of his fingers as he softly went back to his chair; and leaned back, covered his face with his hands, and sobbed like a child.

"I am weak—very weak," he said, deprecatingly, as he raised his eyes at last, and looked from one to the other; "but you unman me with your kindness. I came to you in despair, without ~~clothes~~—without a home—without a ~~sou~~. I came to ask for bread, and a place to lay our weary heads for a few hours. And what do you? You slay me—you crush me down with your kindness. I can never be grateful enough."

"Oh, nonsense—don't say any more about it," said Sir Richard, in a rough, half embarrassed fashion—for this was a sort of thing he could not stand, so he afterwards said to his lady when they were alone. "You managed to escape, though," he said, to change the conversation.

"Escape? Ma foi! yes, it is so, or I should not be here."

"Then you were not set free?" said Lady Lawler, in a husky voice.

"Set free!" exclaimed Rivière, with flashing eyes. "They would have kept me till I died—died of rage and misery—till I beat my breast bare, like a bird in a cage. Ah!" he cried, with a peculiarly expressive gesticulation, as of one trying to press back something he did not wish to see—"ah! but it was frightful. But I will tell you—it is just that you should know;" and by degrees he laid before them the history of his escape.

"I may smoke? Yes? Thanks. I can do so much better when I have the little cigarette. Yes, it is soothing—it is a luxury from which I have been shut so long, that it makes me glad."

He smoked for awhile in silence, sending tiny rings of vapour floating upwards. Then, turning to Lady Lawler—

"She sleeps, then? My Marie? She is at rest? Ah, it is good. She is worn out, poor child. Let her sleep, for she can be at peace now that I am free.

"Free! Yes, out of prison at last! Cursed prison!—wherein I ate my heart!"

He grouched out those last words between his teeth, his face corrugating from brow to chin; and then he made as if he would have spat upon the floor; but, recollecting himself, he glanced at the lady present, and refrained.

"But you shall hear how I escaped," he said more cheerfully, assuming a lighter tone as he addressed himself more particularly to Lady Lawler. "I was changed from prison to prison, time after time. And for what? You know—you believe, I am sure—that I was innocent as a child. I would not have injured an infant. I—I—to think that I would use such intellect as the *bon Dieu* gave me to invent engines to destroy my fellow-creatures—that poor King! Bah! I envy him not his crown—his throne. Let him reign. I know nothing of their schemes—their revolutionary ideas.

"Yes, I was changed from prison to prison, till hope grew almost dead within me. Ah, but it was pitiful to pass those long, weary days, each black and hopeless as night, melting into those long, sleepless nights, which slowly, slowly crept on till it was day once more!

"Hope grew dead, and there seemed nothing but for me to lie down and die as well; only the spirit was too strong within me. I should have died—*miladi* forgives all these details?—yes, I should have lain down to die, but for a strong passion roused within me by my fellow-prisoner.

"Poor Pierre!—he was one of the conspirators. He was guilty, but I believe unavoidably; and from him I learned who was my denouncer—the man whom I had made my friend for years. Heavens! that there should be such villainy upon earth! He was covetous—he hated me; and the time came for getting me away. He was successful. I was cast into prison, and while there I learned that which engendered a horrible suspicion—one that came through my brain like a flash of light; but it made me live.

"Sir Richard, can you feel—you—what it must be to be caged within stone walls, believing that the wife you have loved with your whole heart has plotted with a villain to your destruction?"

"No," said Sir Richard, hoarsely, as he glanced from one to the other—for *Rivière* had paused to hear his reply.

"I," exclaimed *Rivière*, excitedly, as he

smote himself upon the breast—"I lay there with that hideous thought. And I loved *Marie* so," he cried, piteously—"my sweet, gentle, tender-hearted wife! And at times I fought against the cruel thought till it almost maddened me.

"But it made me act," he cried—"it made me strive for freedom, that I might learn the truth. It was, though, a strange time: to-day I was weakly bemoaning my fate, the next I was furious. Ah, yes, *madame*—*miladi* weeps. She has pity for me; but she should turn from me with scorn when I tell of the times when I was mad with my evil thoughts, and cursed poor *Marie* again and again, without waiting to see whether my fancies were right.

"It urged me on, though, this madness; and, with my fellow-captive, I tried to devise some plan for escaping. Ah! *mon Dieu*! what horrid thoughts were mine in those days!

"Pierre aided me, though at times he seemed as if he would sit down and bear his fate—imprisonment for life; but he, too, worked hard to find some means.

"And the days went by, he—Pierre—reckoning them with scraps of straw, till the bag he placed them in grew big; and I trembled lest despair should make me so mad that I should never think again. And still we thought. Should we dig out the mortar and move the stones? The mortar was harder than the cruel stones themselves. Should we loosen the bars of our window, and take one out? *Ma foi*! there was always a pig of a sentry there, to take delight in bruising our fingers with his gun. Once the dog pinned my hand to the wall with his bayonet. See!"

He held out a thin, soft palm, to show a scar in the centre. Then, snatching it back as he saw his hostess shudder—

"But I am stupid," he said. "I have been so long away that I forget even the part of a gentleman. *Miladi* will forgive?"

He continued:

"Pierre said that we should raise one flag of the prison floor, and dig our way out beyond the prison walls. We were not rats. We had no machinery to lift the flag, and despair came over us there.

"What should we do? We could perhaps have slain our gaoler, and so made our way through the passages. I say perhaps, for at times came with him two soldiers; and had we had such a design, bah! Pierre

and Louis Rivière would have been the slain.

"But," he went on, laughing, "we should not have done that. Life bought by life would have been dearly purchased. It was but a passing thought: we should have died sooner than try to shed blood, for we were both miserable cowards. Did we even kill the mice—the spiders? No. We even made pets of and welcomed the flies, like other men who have been in prison.

"Ah!" he cried, after a pause, "how I used to awaken night after night, at one time, from a dream that I was free; at another, from a hideous vision wherein I had been slaying the fiend who had robbed me of my life.

"But then I frighten you," he said, with a look of gentle appeal upon his countenance. "I shock *miladi*. She will indeed think me a madman. Enough. We tried everything, but there was no escape—we were shut in too close; and I tell you that I was dying—dying fast. The spirit was wearing out the flesh, and soon all would have been at an end, when there came a change."

CHAPTER XI.

HOW TO ESCAPE.

"IT was like this," said Rivière, after a pause. "We had lain down upon our straw beds one night. We were worn out with our task.

"What had we been doing? *Ma foi!* we had worked, as in a fierce, hot rage, to loosen a stone in the cell wall—to loosen it, when it was like a rock. But we worked on all the same, one at each joint, picking out tiny scraps of the cement, and grinding them up in our teeth, so that we could smear the white paste upon the wall where it dried, and did not betray us.

"We used to laugh bitterly as we ground the scraps, and say that it whitened the teeth. Even we, weary prisoners that we were, could have our laugh. But it did not whiten our fingers. *Miladi*, I horrify you when I tell you, but I must say all. It is a relief, and you will see what I have suffered. Our fingers bled as we worked, and then we had to stay, for it was more than we could bear.

"We lay then on our beds thinking. Would the gaoler ever forget to fasten our cell—say in a year—two years—ten years? He might forget; and, if so, would it not be

best to wait? Pierre asked me this in a whisper.

"'But he might not forget,' I answered, and Pierre was silent.

"'Could we bribe him?' he said after a while.

"'He would not trust us,' I said, bitterly, for I was loath to hurt the poor fellow's feelings. You see, Sir Richard, our fingers were bleeding, like our hearts, and we were full of sadness just then.

"'Louis,' said Pierre at last, 'why should we work? We may loosen the stone. Good. What then?'

"I did not answer, but lay still, trying to stifle a groan.

"'What then?' he said once more. 'I will tell you, my friend. The inspector will see that it is loose, and we shall be placed in separate cells.'

"I knew that he was right; but, all the time, I felt that we must do it—go on toiling, to keep down the raging energy within us.

"Well, as I said, we had lain down; we had talked; we had made fresh plans, and they had fallen—pouf! like a house of cards. At last a dreamy sense of rest came over me—slowly—slowly, and I dozed off; but only to waken again with a start. Something had moved within the cell!

"I listened. Not a sound, only the breathing of Pierre, and a few muttered words which I could not understand.

"I lay down again, to remain wakeful for a time, but only for the dreamy sense of restfulness to come upon me again; and I slept once more. But again I awoke with a start.

"No, nothing to alarm. Pierre was sleeping still; but I had a feeling that an enemy was near—was in the cell; and that, if I slept, he would attack me.

"I glided out of the bed, and in the darkness felt slowly all round the wall, listening again and again whether any one was trying to escape from me as I followed the cold, dank wall, my fingers searching in the corners.

"Then I tried round the other way, stooping down, and crossing and recrossing the floor, lest any one should be there.

"A dozen times I expected to touch some face, and to be locked in a fierce struggle; but no, all was still; and at last I stood by Pierre's bed, listening.

"All still—not a sound; and I told my-

self that it was fancy, and went once more to lie down.

"For a while no sleep would come, and I lay tossing from side to side. Then I tried to cool my burning fingers against the stone wall. Then the sense of danger—of a hidden enemy—came to make me shudder again.

"But now I fought against it with all my will, and conquered. I knew that no one could be there, and called myself a fool—a coward. 'The good God will protect us,' I said; and I kneeled upon my bed, and prayed—first for Marie, then for my liberty, lastly for protection; and then, no sooner had my head touched the hard pillow than I slept.

"How long I had slept I cannot tell; but I was awakened by a sensation as of a hand clutching my throat.

"'There was, then, some one here,' I remember feeling; and, in my half confused state, I put up both hands to seize my aggressor.

"No hands to touch!—no one to grasp! Mon Dieu! what was it? I could hardly breathe. What was this stifling feeling? Was I ill? Was this a new madness, come from overwrought fancy? No, it must be—Ciel! what? There was a dull red glow—not morning—not sunshine. No sun ever gladdened our cell. But there was the red glow shining in through the bars. And what was that noise?

"Yes, voices—and cries for help!

"Then, shaking off a horrible stupor that oppressed me, I began to comprehend that there were greater horrors than we had suffered yet. I was listening to the tramp of feet—the shouts of ordering officers; and below all, like a deep bass, a solemn, hurrying roar.

"Another second or two, and sense had asserted itself. I was awake—thoroughly awake; and, leaning over Pierre—sleeping deeply, his breath coming in gasps—I shook him fiercely, as I cried—

"'Up!—up! or we shall be burned to death!'"

NEPTUNE'S GARDENS.

A GOOD deal of interest has of late been taken in those beautiful objects in nature—the sea anemones. Most visitors to the seaside, where there is a rocky shore, are familiar with their appearance—

at low tide, as gouts of tinted gelatinous matter; at high water, as Neptune's flowers, passing from the opening bud to the full-grown blossom, radiant with glorious colours.

But it is not necessary to visit the seaside to search for these beautiful zoophytes. A run down to the Crystal Palace, and a descent into Mr. Lloyd's cool cavern, will place the reader en rapport with more sea anemones than he could collect in a lifetime. He will here wake to the fact that were these singular animals large, they would be sea monsters ten times more terrible than anything depicted by Victor Hugo; for, at a word to the intelligent curator, a vessel is brought forward full of minced mussel, into which the attendant dips a long pair of wooden tongs, fishes out a fragment, and offering it to one of the anemones, it is, the moment it touches one tentacle, seized by a hundred more, and dragged voraciously into its interior.

While discoursing lately upon coral islands and their architects, at the Royal Institution, Professor Allman gave a most interesting account of the anemone.

He described it as a fleshy sac, attached by a broad base at one end, and having at the opposite end a mouth surrounded by a wreath of tentacles or feelers. He showed that its stomach consists of a smaller sac suspended in the larger, and opening at one end by the mouth, while at the other end it opens into the surrounding cavity of the larger sac. This free opening of the stomach into the general cavity of the body is a character of great importance, and is possessed by no other group of animals than that to which the sea anemone belongs.

While the sea anemone is immersed in the waters of the sea, and is surrounded by the conditions which promote its health and well-being, it will display its beautiful crown of tentacles, and spread itself out like an expanded flower, often brilliantly and beautifully coloured. But let danger threaten, let a finger rudely touch it, and it will instantly draw in its tentacles and contract itself round them; and then, instead of the expanded flower, we may believe we have before us the same flower in the bud.

The Professor also pointed out how the *Caryophyllia*, which may be found upon various parts of our own shores attached to rocks at low spring-tides, and which essentially agrees in structure with the sea ane-

mone, has the power of separating carbonate of lime from the sea water, and of depositing this mineral, particle by particle, in its tissues, so as to become in great part calcified. In other words, how it has the power of forming a true skeleton of coral.

Now, the *Caryophyllia*, with its skeleton of coral, instead of remaining simple and solitary, like the sea anemone, may throw out buds like a plant, or may complicate itself by partially dividing into two or more segments, and will thus be converted into a compound colony of coral-producing polypes, each polype having its own mouth and stomach, and tentacles and radiating plates; and each, while providing for its own wants, contributing at the same time to the general well-being of the colony. The form of this colony will depend on the disposition and mode of growth of the buds, or of the new polypes produced by the splitting of the old ones; for if all these remain closely impacted together, there would result such massive corals as are familiar in *Astræa* and *Meandrina*; while if they become more or less separated from one another, and grow out into branches, we should then have a branched coral like a *Dendrophyllia* or a *Madrepore*. Now, it is such animals as these *Astræas* and *Meandrinæ* and *Dendrophyllias* and *Madrepores* which form the reefs and coral islands to whose history the discourse was devoted.

It must not, however, be supposed that all coral animals are reef builders. The well-known red coral of commerce, for example, never accumulates in reefs or banks.

Professor Allman having given an account of the nature of the coral animal, and its mode of forming coral, proceeded to describe the home of the reef builders. This region forms an irregular zone, extending for some distance on each side of the equator, but never going farther from it than about 30° of latitude.

The extent of the coral formations within this area has, ever since the seas began to be explored, struck the navigator with astonishment. Along the western coast of New Caledonia is a reef of 400 miles in length; and along the north-east coast of Australia is one of more than 1,200 miles; while it is to the labours of the reef-building polypes that almost all the beautiful islands which stud the tropical portion of the Pacific, and many of those in the Indian Ocean, are mainly due.

The Professor then drew a picture of the aspect of the ocean, and of the most striking members of its fauna in the region of coral reefs. He directed especial attention to the most superficial zone of the tropical ocean—that zone where sea and air and heat and light combine and concentrate the conditions of intensest animality, amid which becomes developed a most beautiful and marvellous fauna; where *Medusæ* and *Siphonophores* wander at their own wild will, propelled through the clear waters by the pulsations of crystal bell or of broad, many-coloured disc, or in vast fleets are floating over the sea, with sail extended to the breeze; where *Pteropods* flit on wings through the water, like butterflies through the air; where *Beroes* catch the sunlight on their sides and flash it back in all the brightest hues of the rainbow; where *Salpæ* play in long undulating chains of crystal, and the *Pyrosoma*, no less clear and crystal-like by day, becomes a cylinder of fire at night.

Now, the coral builders share with these bright and active hosts the prolific surface zone of the ocean. But their area is also a deeper one, and for many fathoms downwards their flower-like discs and banks of living coral may be traced by the sounding-lead and the dredge.

This extension downwards, however, is not unlimited. The ocean varies with its depth in its physical characters, and in the conditions of life which it presents; and the coral-builders find the conditions suited to their welfare within a limited and definite range. This range never extends beyond a depth of from twenty to thirty fathoms, so that no living reef-building coral is ever found at a greater depth than this.

Within the upper portions of this area the coral fauna may be witnessed in all the perfection of its highest development and life; for there the sea is transparent as the purest beryl, and down fathoms deep below the boat the eye can penetrate through the liquid crystal to where the coral bank spreads around, and a scene of marvellous beauty becomes revealed. For there beneath the sea is a garden: carnations and asters and anemones and gorgeous cactus flowers seem there to expand their glowing petals; flexile shrubs root themselves in the crevices of the rocks, and envelop their branches in bright clusters of flowers, like the mezereum bush in the month of March.

What profusion of forms! what richness of colouring! crimson, and golden, and purple, and emerald green, and snowy white;—no garden of the upper air can surpass that garden of the sea in loveliness. But, stranger than all, every petal is replete with sense; every flower and every shrub is an animated being;—touch it, and it shrinks; feed it, and it digests; it rejoices in the warm sunlight, and feels happy in the caress of the ocean tide.

Now the animated flowers of that wonderful sea-garden spend no life of idleness—day after day, night after night, they are at their work; they are the builders of coral, the architects of islands, the ceaseless labourers by whose untiring energy have been rescued from the ocean, thousands of miles of habitable land.

The Atoll is the type of the coral island. It presents the appearance of a circular or irregularly formed ring of coral rising out of the bosom of the ocean, generally clothed with a rich tropical vegetation of cocoa-nut palms, pandanus, and pisonia, surrounded by a wreath of white foam where the sea breaks upon its outer margin, and having a lagoon or lake of still water in the interior.

The ring of coral is usually discontinuous in one or more places, and through the channels thus formed ships can generally sail into the calm central lagoon, which will afford them, no matter how rough may be the external sea, a safe and commodious harbour.

It is scarcely possible to conceive of anything more lovely than one of these lagoon islands, with its graceful palm trees and groves of pisonia, the still, quiet lake within, the restless, landless ocean without, and the glowing sky of the tropics stretching over all. Where

“ Droops the heavy-blossomed bower,
Hangs the heavy-fruited tree,
Summer isles of Eden lying
In dark purple spheres of sea.”

Some of the small uninhabited Atolls especially seem almost as if they had been the work of enchantment. Even the wild creatures which dwell there appear to realize the wonders of the fairy tale, and make us almost believe that they lie under the spell of a magician. The United States explorers assure us that in some of these islands the birds were so little alarmed at the presence of man, that they allowed themselves to be

taken off the branches of trees as if they had been their flowers.

When the Atoll is examined more minutely, it is found that the depth of the central lagoon may be about ten or twenty fathoms; a pure coral sand or fine white coral mud covers its bottom; the flexible and shrub-like species of coral root themselves in its sides; and millions of strange creatures nestle in their branches, or creep over the coral rock, or dart through the waters of the lagoon.

On the outer side of the ring of coral things are very different. The reef here usually extends outwards for some distance as a flat platform, with but a slight depth of water over it; the depth then suddenly increases, and immediately afterwards the sounding-lead sinks into the fathomless ocean, where no bottom can be felt. One of the most remarkable features in an Atoll is thus the extraordinarily rapid rate at which its outer side sinks into the ocean; and this fact must especially be noted, for it will aid us in our attempts to explain the formation of the island.

When it was first known that so many of the islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans owed their existence to the energy of coral animals, it was believed that the coral-formers commenced their labours upon the flat bottom of the sea, at unknown and unfathomable depths, and that they worked continuously upwards to the surface. This, however, is inconsistent with the now well-established fact of the limited range in depth of living coral.

The circular form of the Atoll suggested also that the coral animals established themselves round the crater of some submarine volcano, and that, thence working upwards, they necessarily repeated on the surface of the sea the circular form of their foundation. Now, this would involve the highly improbable supposition that there exists throughout the region of corals innumerable volcanic craters, and that all these are nearly at the very same level—namely, that which alone is suited to the energies of the living coral; while its improbability is rendered still further apparent by the fact that there is no known volcanic crater whose diameter approaches in dimensions to that of many Atolls.

For the beautiful theory which is now universally accepted—the only one, indeed, which is consistent with all the known phe-

nomena, and one of the most important with which the physical history of the earth has of late years been enriched—we are indebted to Mr. Darwin.

The theory of Darwin is founded on two incontestable facts—the one purely physiological, the other purely physical.

The physiological element in the theory of Darwin consists in the fact already insisted on—that the coral animals cannot live at unlimited depths, that they need the presence of light and of other conditions which they can obtain only near the surface, and that from twenty to thirty fathoms below the surface is the greatest depth at which the reef-building polypes can continue to live.

But we have also seen that the outer walls of the coral reef have been followed downwards into depths very much greater than this; and though the coral forming those deep portions is always found to be dead, it is plain that it must have been at one time living, and some additional fact is therefore needed in order to reconcile its occurrence at these great depths with the established limited range of living coral. Here, then, comes to our aid the physical element in the theory. It is this: that while the ocean maintains the same level from age to age all over the world, the solid land is subject to repeated oscillations of level, rising in one place and sinking in another, and this sometimes to an extent of many thousands of feet.

Having demonstrated the reality of this phenomenon by reference to numerous well-known geological facts, such as the sinking of the southern shores of Scandinavia and of the western shores of Greenland, and the rising of the northern shores of Scandinavia and Siberia, the speaker showed how a mountain rising out of the sea in the form of a precipitous island, in the region of the reef-builders, will present on its shores the conditions suited to the coral polypes, which will there attach themselves, building downwards until they arrive at depths too great for the perfect exercise of their functions, and upwards until the surface of the sea sets bounds to the further elevation of their structures. A reef of coral will thus be spread all round the shores of the island, and will constitute the formation known as a Fringing Reef.

But the island is supposed to be in a region of subsidence, and has begun to sink

slowly into the sea, carrying with it the already formed fringe of coral into depths incompatible with the well-being of the polypes. Urged, however, by an unerring instinct, the reef-builders continue their labours upwards simultaneously with the gradual depression of the land, and thus the reef is always extending itself towards the warm sunlit surface of the sea, where all the conditions of coral life exist, while the lower parts have passed downwards into depths where the formers of coral must cease to live.

The reef has thus grown larger; and as the coral is produced in greater force on the outer edge, where the reef is exposed to the open ocean, with all the conditions in which the animals forming it delight, this part is sooner brought to the surface than the inner part, where the growth of the coral is still further interfered with by the accumulation of fragments which the waves tear from the reef, break down into coral sand and coral mud, and carry inwards towards the land. A deep channel is thus formed between the outer part of the reef and the shores round which the coral has attached itself; and what was at first a Fringing Reef becomes in this way converted into a Barrier Reef.

In the meantime fragments of coral broken off by the waves are gradually piled upon the upper surface of the reef, which is thus in time raised above the sea in the form of a long stretch of dry land, separated from what still remains of the original island by the intervening channel of still water, and capable, in the course of time, of affording, by the decomposition of its surface, a soil in which terrestrial plants may take root.

But the changes do not end with the formation of a Barrier Reef; for the work of subsidence goes on, and the ancient land continues to sink deeper and deeper into the sea, carrying the coral polypes down with it into the dark, ungenial ocean depths, where they must inevitably perish. And now at last the highest point has disappeared, all has sunk beneath the sea, and a wide waste of landless waters rolls unbroken over its summit.

The island architects are not, however, to be baffled. As the lower parts of the reef sink into depths where they must perish, the upper parts are simultaneously extending themselves as a bank of living coral towards the surface, which at last they reach in the

form of a more or less circular reef, on which the waves once more break, and which includes within it a sheltered lagoon, now free from even the last remnant of included land; and the Barrier Reef becomes thus converted into an Atoll.

But the Atoll whose formation we have been following is not yet dry land. It is still a submerged reef over which the waves roll; for the polypes cannot extend their works into the upper air. Further changes, therefore, still await it. Fragments torn from its outer side by the waves are piled upon its surface, and it rises higher and higher from the sea; the decomposing coral covers the reef with a fertile soil, to which the wind and the ocean currents may bring the seeds of plants from other lands, and a graceful vegetation clothes in time its sea-girt shores.

And thus the Atoll becomes fitted for the sustenance of terrestrial animals and man. Sea birds in multitudes find shelter there, and land birds from distant shores see in it a country where they may dwell; while the drifted trunk of the forest tree, to which the lizard and the insect still cling, is cast upon its strand to begin the peopling of its woods with still other forms of life.

Some large fruit-eating bats too have discovered it; but no other mammal has ever formed part of the aboriginal fauna of the Coral Island.

Its latest occupant is doubtless man; but whence he came, from what original stock he migrated, we have no positive evidence to determine.

If we except the Feejee group and some of the high coral-encircled islands which lie at the extreme west of the area, and in which the inhabitants are Negritos, characterized by their black skins, frizzled hair, and repulsive features, we shall find a great uniformity of type to prevail over the Pacific coral region—a type with lighter skin and straight or wavy hair, and one which points towards an affinity with the Malay races of south-eastern Asia. We are not, however, on this account to suppose that the islands were necessarily peopled by direct migration from the Asiatic shores. If we suppose that the high islands, with their encircling barrier reefs, represent the last remnant of a submerged continent, it is quite possible that these islands may have retained the last remnant also of its population. But whether this be so or not, it is certain that the Atolls

must have been independently peopled, either from the surrounding islands, or from some more distant continent. The Atoll rose from the bosom of the ocean destitute of terrestrial life, and many a century must have passed before the presence of man broke the solitude of its shores. We may well believe that at last some savages, drifted out of their course by adverse winds, had run their canoe upon the strand and had taken possession of the land of the polype. The fish of the lagoon, the mollusca of the shore, the fruit of the wood, afford them their subsistence; they have discovered that a pit dug a few feet deep into the coral rock will reach a reservoir of fresh water, accumulated from the rains, which had percolated through the more superficial porous structures; the friction of two pieces of dry timber yields them fire; while their spears, fashioned by a piece of sharp stone found entangled in the roots of some drift-wood, facilitate the acquisition of food, and make the struggle for existence more easy.

And so years pass on, and the descendants of the first accidental settlers have peopled the island; but, after all, the Coral Island is but ill-fitted for human development, without a hill to break the uniformity of its surface, without a stream to hollow out a valley, without a single metal, without a mineral beyond the unvaried calcareous coral rock, without a mammal other than the bird-like bat. The native, cut off from all communication with other lands, will have few ideas; while his wants, few and easily satisfied by the spontaneous produce of the island, will afford little motive for exertion, and little stimulus to development; and it is in later times and from other lands where civilization has already spread, where knowledge has already advanced, civilization and knowledge must be carried to the Coral Island.

And so centuries still roll on, until at last from these other shores the destined race has landed on the island—a race with higher powers, a more cultivated intellect, and an increased capacity for improvement. The bread-fruit and the banana and the yam are cultivated; the fruits of the woods, and the pearl shell and the trepang of the lagoon are sought after by the trader; the relations of commerce are established, and the Coral Island takes its place in the great community of nations.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XVII.

"THAT is settled, then," presently exclaimed Mr. M'Lachlan, emptying the decanter into his glass as he spoke.

"My dear sir," I almost involuntarily cried out, "have you not had wine enough?"

I feared offending him, but dreaded more the consequences of his continuing to drink.

"Perhaps I have," he replied, quite good humouredly—"too much, maybe. Thank you, Tom, for reminding me that I was forgetting myself."

Poor man! he buried his face in both his hands, his elbows resting on the table, and so remained for several minutes. I sat looking at him in much sorrow.

"What a fine figure of a man he is," was the thought that arose in my mind as I traced the wonderful resemblance he bore to his son and daughter—or rather, they to him.

Presently he looked up, and, forcing a smile, said—

"No doubt you think me a queer fellow, Tom; but you don't know—Heaven grant you may never know—the amount of trouble and anxiety that has fallen upon me of late."

He paused, as if for an answer, or some expression of condolence or sympathy; and, not knowing what to say, I had once again recourse to the convenient interjection—

"Oh!"

This apparently satisfied my future father-in-law, who continued—

"While there's life there's hope," they say; and the storm may blow over, after all."

"To be sure it will," I ventured to observe, speaking in a pleasant tone of voice.

He frowned.

"What do you know about it, eh?"

I had made a mistake, and thinking silence would be its best atonement, held my tongue.

"In any case," he continued, "I am glad your affair is settled. Should matters turn out as I fear, it is a load off my mind; if better, you will rise to the level of your circumstances, I have not the smallest doubt."

As I had not the faintest idea what he was talking about, I concluded my wisest plan would be to keep silent.

"Yes," he said, after a pause, "you have metal in you, Tom, with the true ring in it, notwithstanding some of your puritanical notions. Don't think, though, I disparage religion—Heaven forbid. I respect the genuine article as much as any man. It is only the sham I hate. Emma is a little touched your way, I think; but will suit you all the better for that, and you her. If you knew," he went on after a brief pause, "how I have worshipped that child, Tom—how I have toiled and striven for her—you would never let the wind of Heaven blow on her roughly—my darling girl!"

The great tears were standing in his eyes, ready to overflow.

"My dear sir—" I began.

"There—I am sure you will be good, and kind, and loving to her."

Here he fairly broke down and sobbed.

"Mr. M'Lachlan, my dear sir, let me—"

"Don't," sobbed the poor fellow—"let me alone. I'm a fool—an ass—an idiot!" he continued, with increasing energy; and then, raising his head off the table, on which it had been resting, he dashed the tears from his eyes, and, looking me full in the face, asked the following question:

"Do you remember a conversation we had here the other evening about what you saw, or thought you had seen?"

"Perfectly."

"Do you still hold by your theory that it was not your father's spirit you saw, but a phantasm evoked by the last effort of his dying will?"

"I think so."

"Do you remember a question I asked you, and which you were prevented answering by my wife coming in?"

"Let me see."

"I asked you what you thought about death."

"It is a subject I would much prefer not to discuss."

"Never mind what you prefer—I want your answer."

"Excuse me, what weight can my single opinion have against the dicta of the whole world, as I may say?"

I was determined to put a stop to the discussion—for discussion I knew it must come to—and abruptly left the room.

I had scarcely taken up a position beside Emma, who was at the piano, and had immediately requisitioned me to sing, when her father came in from the dining-room.

His face was flushed, but his demeanour calm, and his gait perfectly steady.

Mrs. M'Lachlan was at the tea table; and, in passing, her husband chucked her under the chin, and said, "Well, old woman, how are you getting on?" much to the lady's astonishment; and, without waiting for an answer, walked over to where I stood, and, tapping me on the shoulder, hissed rather than whispered in my ear—

"Do you believe in Heaven and hell?"

I was so taken by surprise, and alarmed by the tone of his voice, which resembled nothing earthly, that I started involuntarily.

"What was that you said to Tom, papa?" inquired my darling of her father, who took no notice of her question, but again addressing me, asked—

"Well, Tom, your answer?"

"Really, sir," I replied, "your question is most inopportune."

"Time is pressing."

"What are you talking about, papa?"

"Never you mind."

The tears came into my darling's eyes. She did not understand her father's altered mood, neither did I; but at sight of her grief he melted:

"I believe I am not in my right mind to-night, Sissy, my darling," he said, stooping down to kiss her forehead. "Go on with your music; and you, Tom, with your singing. But I haven't done with you yet, young man," he added, in an undertone:

Could I but have divined!

It may be imagined that my enjoyment of the music was pretty well spoiled for the remainder of the evening; indeed, a gloom had settled on us all—owing in the main, no doubt, to Bob's absence.

I tried to reckon how many times, in the course of the evening, his mother had taken out her watch, and wondered whereabouts on his journey he might be; but I lost my account, and gave up the attempt.

Poor mother!

Miss Marshall retired to her own room early. Emma complained to me, in confidence, of a headache. I myself had the headache. Mrs. M'Lachlan was absorbed in the contemplation of her son's likeness, which he had caused to be taken and made into a brooch some days previous to his departure; while Mr. M'Lachlan sat gloomy and silent, but not asleep, on the sofa.

We were by no means a gay party; and when, soon after ten o'clock, I got up with

the intention of going home to the terrace, no one opposed the step.

"We shall see you to-morrow?" said the lady of the house, as I shook hands.

"You'll be sure to come early, Tom?" whispered Emma, as she took my arm and came with me into the hall, where she insisted upon helping me on with my coat; and I then stepped out into the dark.

It was a very dark night, in the latter end of March, and very cold, but not exactly freezing; and I walked home at a rapid pace.

Could I but have foreseen!

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON my arrival at the terrace, I found a letter awaiting me with the Dumfrynaghalee post-mark.

I looked at it again and again, scarcely believing the evidence of my senses. I turned it round and round in my hand, and, instead of at once opening it and ascertaining who had sent it, kept on wondering and speculating as to its contents for several minutes.

At length, however, I opened it.

"MY DEAR SIR" (it began)—"I dare say you will be surprised to receive a letter from me—"

"Who in the world are you?" I said aloud to myself, and referred to the end of the document for an answer. It was signed—

"Yours faithfully, "T. DOBBIE."

A light broke in upon me: that was surely the name of Sir Stewart Middleton's Scotch agent at Dumfrynaghalee.

"Let me see what he has to say."

"MY DEAR SIR—I dare say you will be surprised to receive a letter from me; but the brief interview we had with you last December has left so favourable an impression both on Mrs. Dobbie and myself, that I take the very earliest opportunity of acquainting you with the fact that our Dispensary is once more vacant, in consequence of the unexpected resignation of Dr. Potts. The vacancy will be filled up next week; and I would recommend you to lose no time in coming down, as it will be advisable, for courtesy's sake, that you should visit the farmers and the rector before the day of election. The salary attached to the

appointment is £100 per annum, exclusive of registration and nomination fees. The late Sir Stewart allowed another hundred, which I shall take upon me, pending instructions from Sir John, to continue to you. You will also have a good house and garden at a nominal rent; and might, I think, do worse.—Believe me, yours faithfully,

“T. DOBBIE.

“P.S. The present baronet, with whom we have put ourselves in communication, has been resident in Australia for many years, where he has been, and still is, in practice as a physician. I need scarcely say your election will be a matter of course.”

I don't think I was ever more surprised in my life: to think of Doctor Middleton, my poor father's valued friend, succeeding to a baronetcy and some twenty thousand a year! It was incredible!

I tossed and tumbled about all night. My fortune was greater than I could have expected. How I longed for daylight, to hasten with the news to The Grove! It was almost too good to be true.

“Certainly, I shall take the very first train to the north.”

I was at The Grove by eight o'clock in the morning, without waiting for breakfast.

“Are your master and mistress downstairs, Thomas?” I inquired of the man who let me in.

“Master's been gone out some time, sir,” he replied. “The mistress and Miss Emma are not down yet; but Miss Marshall's in the breakfast-room.”

To the breakfast-room accordingly I hurried.

“Mr. Cochrane!” exclaimed the governess on seeing me—“how wild you look! Do say there is nothing the matter.”

“Nothing,” I replied—“at least, nothing of any consequence—that is, nothing serious, Miss Marshall. But I have news of great importance for Mrs. M'Lachlan.”

“And Emma?”

“And for Emma also. Will you be kind enough to send some one to tell them? It is very particular.”

“Nothing about Mr. M'Lachlan?” she exclaimed, clasping her hands, and putting on the air of a tragedy queen. “Do not tell me anything has happened to him!”

“Dear me, no, Miss Marshall,” I replied, puzzled by her manner. “What can have put such an idea into your head?”

“I don't know. But have you not noticed how very strange he has been—almost wild—for some time past?”

I had noticed it, but did not choose to say so; and answered her question, Irish fashion, by asking another:

“Do you think so, Miss Marshall?”

“I do, indeed—indeed, I do.”

I had no intention she should get up a scene for my benefit, and hastened to say—

“Will you kindly oblige me by sending some one to tell Mrs. M'Lachlan that I am here, and wish to speak to her directly for a minute?”

The governess, however, displayed such evident reluctance to do so until she knew what the intelligence might be, that, in order to save time, I told her all about my letter from Dumfernaghalee.

“I am sure I congratulate you,” she said—warmly for her—when I had finished, and immediately hurried off to tell my mother-in-law, who presently made her appearance.

“My dear Tom,” she exclaimed, shaking me cordially by both hands, “I wish you joy. You must lose no time in closing with so excellent an offer.”

“I shall go down by the very first train.”

“Do so; and, Tom, you ought to telegraph to Mr. Dobbie that you will be there to-day.”

“Not to-day—I cannot possibly get there before to-morrow. However, I'll send him a telegram at once.”

Emma was delighted.

“My dear Tom,” she said, “I am so pleased; though, at the same time, I shall be more sorry than I can say to lose you even for a week. Still, you must go down and see the farmers.”

After a hurried breakfast I started off for the Great Northern terminus, and arrived the same evening in Pennyletter.

Next morning I took the car on to Dumfernaghalee. The weather was not much more favourable than on the occasion of my last visit; but, on the whole, it was not, perhaps, so cold.

There was not a sign, however, of vegetation on the trees; but the place, nevertheless, seemed to have wonderfully improved. Could it be that my feelings towards it had undergone a change?

It must have been even so.

The agent received me in the most friendly manner, as did also his wife. The

rector was kind; and the Lady Georgiana, his wife, most condescending.

The farmers, if rough, were civil.

"There's a power of candidates in the field," said one; "but let me whisper a say-cret, doctor—you're the man. The agent hasn't spoke yet, but—" Here the worthy fellow nodded his head sagaciously, as much as to say, "Never mind, we know all about it, nevertheless."

I suppose, if one were to look into it, the proceeding could not exactly be called a fair one; but, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, that was the way they managed such matters in the country then; and may yet, for anything I know to the contrary.

The landlord—or, more frequently, his agent—nominated whom he chose; and the farmers, who composed the committee, were—*bon gré, malgré*—compelled to acquiesce in the great man's choice; for they were all tenants at will, and could not afford to offend him. It was just the same in any other election.

The first few days I spent in Dumfernaghalee were most enjoyable. I went the round of the farmers, one by one, and was everywhere most pleasantly, not to say cordially, received.

I was the last candidate in the field, it was true; but the great man had smiled upon me, and that fact in itself was sufficient to ensure me a warm reception.

Had the electors been free agents, it is just possible I might have been differently received.

There were seven applicants for the situation, including myself. Two of them, however, failed to put in an appearance on the morning of the election, and were, *ipso facto*, disqualified; personal attendance before the committee being indispensable. Three were under age; and thus the number of candidates who went to the poll was, by elimination, reduced to two—viz., Dr. Dunderhead and myself.

Dr. Dunderhead was a local man, and had moved heaven and earth, so to speak, to secure for himself a majority of votes, but with indifferent success. The agent did not approve of him; and, moreover, had decided upon giving me the appointment.

I was elected, of course; and immediately wrote a long letter to Emma, announcing my good fortune, and speedy return to Dublin.

She has since declared that it was the

most melancholy and altogether unsatisfactory epistle I have ever written to her: a fact which may be accounted for in several ways.

In the first place, I had only received two short notes from her during the whole of my stay at Dumfernaghalee, although I had written long letters to her every day; and if my last was unsatisfactory, both of hers were pre-eminently so.

I was far, however, from suspecting how much cause she had to depress her; and failed, in consequence, to appreciate the devotion that prompted her to hide from me the depth of trouble into which she had fallen during my brief absence from her side.

Again, although I was most anxious, for obvious reasons, to secure the appointment, I was truly sorry when I knew for certain that I had been elected, and must henceforth, for an unknown number of weary years, make up my mind to reside amidst the utter bleakness of Dumfernaghalee.

Ah me! the dreary weariness of its one long, shabby-looking street! The frowsy, bedraggled appearance of its slatternly female, the reckless, care-about-nothing air of its ragged male inhabitants, and the neglected aspect of its youth of either sex, that gathered round the Court-house on that bleak March morning!

What a tiresome hour we spent, walking up and down before that building, wherein our fate was apparently being fairly decided, Dr. Dunderhead and I.

I don't think I ever saw a man look so cold as he; and yet I had liked the place well enough on my arrival in it just a week before.

I feared I must be very fickle-minded; but forgot the element of hope I had just lost—the secret hope that, after all, I might be rejected.

But it was now all over. My fate, for some years at least, was fixed.

What changes in one's sentiments an hour or two will sometimes work!

The chairman congratulated me. The committee, individually and collectively, congratulated me. One of the committeemen offered to provide me with a house, and another with a horse; while a third carried me off to see a poor fellow, a protégé of his, who was in the last stage of consumption, and seemed much disappointed that I did not cure him on the spot.

I had been asked, when called before the committee, amongst other questions, whether I was married. I felt my face glow as I replied that I was not, but soon hoped to be.

"Feared to be," corrected one of the farmers; whereupon a laugh went round the table, as much at his expense as mine.

I was provided with a number of testimonials, of course. Some of these were absurd enough. I append a selection from them, in order that the reader may judge for himself.

The first is from my good friend and master, the Professor, and needs no comment from me. Mr. Dobbie was pleased to say it influenced him largely in preferring my humble self to Dr. Dunderhead; but inasmuch as he had written the letter I have transcribed elsewhere before reading it, I imagine he must have been gifted with second-sight.

"Dr. T. Cochrane," wrote the Professor, "having been my pupil, I have had the fullest opportunity of forming a correct estimate of his character, abilities, and professional attainments. He also acted as my clinical clerk in St. Cuthbert's Hospital, and I have no hesitation in recommending him as a most intelligent and promising physician. From his knowledge of the world, and his religious principles, I look upon him as peculiarly well qualified to fill the office of medical attendant to any public institution:

(Signed)

"F. J. BENNETT, M.D., T.C.D., M.R.I.A.,
Fellow of the College of Dissectors,
&c., &c."

Another gentleman, with whom my acquaintance was of the slightest—and whom, in fact, I had not thought of asking for a testimonial until advised to do so by a friend—was not afraid or ashamed to write as follows:

"I have been long acquainted with Dr. Thomas Cochrane, and have had frequent opportunities of forming an opinion of his qualifications as a medical man. Dr. Cochrane has received the best education in medicine and surgery which this country affords. I believe him to be, in all respects, well fitted to discharge the important duties of attendant on a Dispensary. For Dr. Cochrane's private character I have the highest respect."

My friend Charles Woodward certified as follows:—

"I have been acquainted with Dr. T. Cochrane for some time, and it gives me peculiar satisfaction to be able to testify to his unvarying rectitude of conduct and high professional attainments. I feel assured that he will discharge the duties of any appointment he may obtain in the most unexceptionable manner.

(Signed) "CHAS. WOODWARD, M.A., Clk."

"I say, old chap, shall I write you a testimonial?" inquired my friend Robert. "I'll touch up your virtues in all the colours of the rainbow."

But I had sufficient modesty, or self-denial, to decline the flattering offer.

To say that I regretted my success would be far short of the truth: in my secret heart, I loathed it. I was almost in despair at what should have delighted me.

Truly, human nature is an inexplicable riddle.

After the election I dined with the agent, who was again good enough to express the satisfaction he felt at having had it in his power to bestow the vacant appointment upon one so admirably qualified to fill it.

My modesty was truly put to shame more than once that afternoon, and it was with a feeling of great relief that I took my place upon the car that was to convey me back to Pennyletter.

Could I have guessed the news that awaited me at my journey's end, my satisfaction would, undoubtedly, have been changed into regret, while my anxiety to reach Dublin would have been a million-fold increased.

It is well we cannot penetrate the future.

At the terrace all was as usual.

I arrived just at dinner-time, and was forced to submit to another round of congratulations.

I imagined Miss Fernley wished to embrace me, and kept out of her reach.

"Ye'll be wantin' a wife now, Mr. Cochrane," drawled Miss Sharman.

"I have one bespoke, thank you," I replied, to the evident surprise of the whole community.

"Well, now, aint you a sly one!"

It was Miss Sharman who spoke.

"Is it Miss M'Lachlan, if that's a fair question?" asked Miss Fernley, with much appearance of interest.

"It is not a fair question," I replied; "but, nevertheless, I don't mind saying it is not anybody else."

"It's a beautiful country you're going to live in, anyway," put in one of the clerks, good-naturedly pitying my confusion. "I was born within a few miles of Dumfriesghalee, and know the whole place well. It's a garden, it is, in the summer."

"And a Slough of Despond in the winter," I was discontented and peevish enough to reply.

"How I envy you all the butter an' eggs you'll be aitin'," remarked Miss Sharman, whose fondest thoughts were ever fixed upon her palate.

"If Charles had the curacy down there, now, Mr. Cochrane, it would be very nice for both of you," remarked Miss Fernley, blandly smiling.

I thought so too, but had no time to spare for conversation, and nodded an acquiescent reply. I was in a hurry to reach The Grove.

I was very hungry, for I had eaten nothing since morning. So, after hastily swallowing a few mouthfuls, I begged to be excused, and rushed up to my own room, looked at my birds, which I found were flourishing—I had made them over to my landlady's care during my absence—made a rapid and necessarily imperfect toilet, rushed downstairs, called a cab from the neighbouring stand, and drove off as quick as the horse could go to Clonskeagh; where I fortunately dismissed my Jehu, at the gate of The Grove.

I had to ring three times before the lodge-keeper appeared. At the third summons she came out, very leisurely tying on her apron.

"Well, Mrs. Mackey," I said, as she deliberately unfastened the gate, "how are they all at the house?"

Instead of answering me, she remarked, as if speaking to herself—

"I see she hasn't told him."

"Told me! Who hasn't told me? What do you mean?"

Her manner was so peculiar that I instinctively felt there must be something very wrong.

The woman positively smiled.

"What is it?" I asked again. "What has happened?"

"Happened?" she repeated slowly. "Wasn't it artful of her not to tell you!"

"The woman must be drunk," I thought, and started off, taking a short cut across the lawn.

"He shot himself through the head, the day you went down to the country!" shouted the woman after me, in a loud and mocking tone of voice, that haunted me for many a day after.

RAIL, ROAD, AND RIVER IN BENGAL.

WHOEVER visited the interior of Bengal twenty years ago confided the safety and conveyance of his person to a palkee, a dakghari, or a boat. If his destination lay near the Ganges, he embarked on board a budgerow; if the Grand Trunk Road offered a more direct route, he entered a dakghari; while if the district to be traversed presented solitudes of rock or jungle untamed by human art, he chose the slow but steady progress of a palkee.

Now, however, every one travelling northwards from Calcutta uses the railway, and quiet reigns where once the splash of oars and clatter of hoofs sounded by night and day.

Still, many places of by no means slight importance are free from the trail—or, to speak technically, the T rail—of the iron fiery serpent, and these prevent the vehicles of our forefathers, though justly deemed old-fashioned, from becoming obsolete or unworthy some degree of notice.

That which has offered the least resistance to the advance of science and civilization is the budgerow. Indeed, but for a few natives and indigo planters, who, jealous of innovation, still employ the river as the chief communication between their estates and the capital, we might search in vain on the broad bosom of the Ganges, once the highway of traffic in Bengal, for an illustration of that keelless craft.

In the scale of size, a budgerow intervenes between the light skiff called a dinghee and the huge nokar, or nau—such a vessel as our own barge, fitted with a sail, and employed in the conveyance of wood, cotton, seeds, and other heavy cargoes. Being used solely for carrying passengers, its comfort and cleanliness, as well as the quality and elegance of its construction, are unequalled in Eastern waters. Nevertheless, its proportions give little pleasure to eyes familiar with the symmetry of English boat-building;

for, besides being keelless and shallow, to suit the navigation of rivers whose sands are ever shifting, ever gathering, it is also wide, heavy, and unwieldy. In the after-part is a cabin raised above the bulwarks; so that the windows, guarded only by Venetian blinds, admit the lightest breeze. Behind the cabin stands the steersman, guiding the unwilling craft by a broad, flat oar. In the bows, on a low platform, level with the bulwarks, sit the rowers, squatted on the bare boards. Their oars, straight and rough, hewn, are attached by loops of cord to short stout pieces of wood fixed in the gunwale, like English rowlocks.

The savage appearance of the crew, their long black hair and broad shoulders, their sinewy muscles and hairy breasts, their laborious movements, as at every stroke they rise and turn half round towards their oars, the uncouth sounds with which they measure time, invoking the river gods in harsh, unearthly songs—these things never fade from the startled memory of the civilized observer.

With the usual incidents and accessories of a journey by dakghari the reader is, no doubt, better acquainted; with the apparent unfitness of the said ghari to reach its destination intact; with the miserable ponies covered with sores, thin and bony, blind or lame, tied in the shafts with harness made of rope; with the aversion of the said ponies to start, and with their suddenly galloping off at full speed; with the promising exterior of the dak-bungalows, at which the traveller, tired, hot, and hungry, arrives when least expected; and with the state of destitution pervading the interior, whose only furniture is a pallet bed without bedding, a camp table, two chairs, a set of rules, and a larder of which the sole contents are a half-starved fowl.

A remarkable man is the driver of a dakghari, stern and reticent as a wild huntsman, whom, with trumpet at his side, he not a little resembles. His lithe body is wrapped in a tight-fitting, thickly quilted coat; his trousers, more tightly fitting still, reveal accurately the shape of his leg; his shoes are turned up two or three inches at the toe, and his head is swathed in a mass of long twists of red cloth, which scarcely leave visible eyes, nose, or mouth.

Bearers of a palkee, too, are men with peculiar professional characteristics, indicative of the free and easy manner of their

life. Far from possessing the silent dignity so befitting the solitary, exalted box-seat of a dakghari, they are merry, light-hearted fellows, full of humour, and blessed with that assurance which springs from mixture with the world. Their capability of sustaining fatigue is marvellous. With a wooden palkee, containing a mattress and pillows, rugs and books, and whatever articles of refreshment or amusement the occupant of the vehicle—himself by no means the least or lightest part of the burden—fancies necessary to relieve the tedium of his incarceration, eight miles is the ordinary stage for six of these graminivorous Hindoos.

Such were the companions in whose society the young cadet, or junior civil servant, was wont to shed his covering of early verdure. Confined in the narrow limits of a cabin by day, by night moored against the river's bank, or if on the road, supporting a jolting existence, recumbent, like an invalid, on his aching back. Such, too, the companions he is forced to choose in passing from one point of his district to another, now that cadetship or junior magistracy is merged in a full-blown colonelcy or judgeship—unless, indeed, the stables of himself and friends provide relays of horses sufficient for the road.

The journey from Calcutta to Delhi—a distance of 1,000 miles—occupied, under the auspices of such aids to locomotion as these, a period averaging sixty days; whereas, by the help of the fiery serpent before-mentioned, it is performed now in as many hours.

The East Indian Railway opens up the whole of Eastern and Northern India—following, as closely as possible, the course of the Ganges and Grand Trunk Road. The largest town through which it passes is Allahabad; and here a junction has been formed with the railway that crosses the peninsula to Bombay. The other large towns lying between Calcutta and the Punjab—Benares, Agra, and Lucknow—are not approached by the main line, but connected with it by separate branches. There is not one tunnel on its whole length, or any embankment or excavation worthy of particular notice; but the bridges carrying its iron rails over the fiercely rushing rivers of the plains constitute it a wondrous monument of engineering enterprise and skill. The elegance of their proportions, the lightness of their slim long tubes, the solidity of

their foundations—built, nevertheless, on soil apparently treacherous as any sand bank—fail not to excite in every one who sees them unfeigned admiration and surprise. Remembering the number of these aerial structures in localities where, far from ports and good roads, the difficulty of obtaining the materials used in their erection must have been almost insurmountable, we cannot help wondering how it is that at Calcutta—where ships are daily anchoring with heavy cargoes of iron and machinery, and where manual labour is most abundant—the broad, deep, and treacherous Hooghly, separating the Governor-General and the million subjects around his Court from the only means of communication they possess with their fellow-countrymen throughout the vast empire, is still unbridged.

The usual rate of speed maintained upon the line is from twenty to five and twenty miles an hour. The first-class carriages are fitted with movable sleeping berths—in many instances with retiring rooms and appliances for washing. Many of the third class, on the other hand, contain no fittings whatever—even seats; while some are built with a second storey, or upper compartment. To meet the convenience of those natives who object to squatting on the floor, an “intermediate” class has been introduced, answering in all respects to the inferior carriages employed on the most economically conducted lines in Great Britain.

From station to station the train glides pleasantly—its departure plunging telegraph clerks and station-masters into ennui and sleep; its advent arousing them to the dissipation of a gossip with their brother officers, whose more active habits give superior opportunities for collecting the news of the day. Natives from the surrounding districts peer curiously through the railway gates at their countrymen confined in the closely packed carriages, or at others distractedly endeavouring to obtain accommodation—the women laden with babies and bundles, the men encumbered with big cotton umbrellas. Trays of sweetmeats, ghee and sugar cakes, pig nuts, ginger beer, plantains, and betel nut are carried round for the delectation of India's sons and daughters; while for the use of Albion's favoured race a refreshment-room opens its hospitable doors, furnished well with articles of sustenance and cheer. Those whom its luxuries entice in vain, parade the platform, loosely

appareled, as befits both climate and occasion, and, with nose uplifted from the dusky herd, seek to perfume the oleaginous atmosphere with scent of soporific weeds. Wives and sisters, less able to meet the public eye in a state of unfashionable simplicity, remain in the retirement of their carriages—otherwise filled with luggage or tobacco smoke, in direct contravention of the Company's bye-laws, signed in print by the secretary, suspended on the walls, but disregarded alike by officials and passengers. The engine driver, red-hot with professional zeal, hurries no one from board or book. Soup is drunk in peace; pipes are likewise emblems of that gentle state. Indeed, there prevails, to all appearance, an utter forgetfulness of a public anxiously awaiting the arrival of its mails, which it usually receives from two to ten hours late.

In long up-country journeys, whether performed by road or rail, the question of an Indian gold currency frequently forces itself upon the traveller's consideration—not as to its expediency, for it is that very expediency which creates the question; nor as to its introduction, for sovereigns and half-sovereigns, Australian and English, may occasionally be met with; but as to its continuance.

A week or ten days is generally sufficient to absorb any amount of gold coin put in circulation by the Government. However stringent the law regulating its value, it is at once bought at a premium, and cast into the melting-pots of the native jewellers. Bank notes, of as low a value as ten rupees, act in some degree as its substitute; but in many parts of the Mofussil they are not accepted in payment except under exorbitant discount. A rupee, then, of the size and value of a florin, being in both respects the largest coin commonly used in India, consider the inconvenience of lining your pockets—not to say hat, coat, trousers, and boots—with cash sufficient for travelling expenses.

A seat is to be engaged, or a ticket to be purchased. For this purpose, the required number of dirty silver pieces are ranged on the counter in piles of ten or twenty. In your haste you overturn one of these heaps, and all its component parts roll into out-of-the-way chinks and corners, whence they are extracted with much loss of time and temper, both to yourself and to a crowd of other impatient applicants. A cup of tea,

the toll of pike or ferry, the hire of innumerable coolies, necessitates a search in the canvas bag which contains your silver store of several pounds weight. A four-anna piece is the sum demanded; but nothing smaller than a half-rupee rewards your lengthened labour. It is dropped back with disgust among its bigger brethren; the engine whistles, or the driver of the dakghari cracks his whip, and, under the impression that you are about to start, a rupee—three times more than the amount due—is thrust in desperation into your creditor's hand.

At night matters are a thousand times worse. A dim oil lamp is burning in an inner room of the hotel, or dak-bungalow, at which your tumbledown ghari deposits you. The only sounds that break the stillness of the night are the howls of jackals, and the yelping of pariah dogs. The apparent isolation of the place, the dark, weird house, and the watchful glances of the servants who hasten to meet you, aid each other in deepening your reminiscences of the mutiny and massacre. On receiving a satisfactory reply to your inquiry for suitable accommodation, you descend from the carriage. A silvery voice escapes from the depths of the canvas bag, held for safety in your hand. The dark eyes of the dusky attendants are attracted to the valuable burden. They, just roused from their first sleep, move drowsily to and fro, arranging your room; or, like ghosts, stand silent and inactive, closely shrouded in long white garments.

Having refreshed the outward and inner man, you are preparing to go to bed, when your bearer approaches, and recounts, in mysterious, low-pitched tones, how, a few days ago, a gentleman staying at that very house lost a box containing several hundred rupees. The servants are suspected of the theft; but no trace of the missing property has been discovered. Your bearer himself—a downward-looking man—seems particularly interested in the subject, and impresses on you the greatest caution with regard to your belongings. In admiration of his faithfulness, and deference to his advice, you tell him, as a preliminary step towards securing your money, that he may retire for the night. On his departure, all the doors of your room undergo a careful examination. They are eight in number. Two are in good order, and shut satisfactorily with bolts and

bars. Two others have bolts, but will not shut. In vain you endeavour to reconcile them to their frames—they resist all your efforts, and grin open-mouthed at your failure. At length, the bed suggests itself as an impromptu barricade, and that article of furniture is accordingly placed in front of them.

While thus occupied, the suspicion arises that a pair of black eyes are glaring through the half-glazed door. Looking up, a turban disappears behind the panelling. On hastening to the spot, no turban or any possible owner thereof is to be seen. Returning to your interrupted labours, the fact that four doors still remain unfastened forces itself unpleasantly on your mind. One has a chain whose links, as if mourning the departed staple, give audible warning when moved from the perpendicular; but the other three appear to have parted with their ironmongery at a very remote period. The washhand-stand is consequently made to serve as a defence to one; a water-bottle, delicately balanced on the edge of a chair, protects another; while the third is, so to say, backed up by a pile of packages calculated to fall at the slightest touch.

These precautions taken, you sit down to rest, and consider how the long, dreary night shall be passed. It is now a matter of perfect certainty that an attempt will be made to steal your money. Dawn, and the bustle of returning day, can alone restore entire confidence. Till then, a sleepless vigil must be kept. With this determination, you trim the candle, and, laying a loaded revolver on the table, commence to read. Two pages have not been disposed of before the letters assume most eccentric shapes and colours, and, finally, become obscured in a thickly darkening mist. This clears off with a crash of falling boxes, and you instinctively grasp your revolver as a native rushes into the room. However, he is only a servant who has been disturbed by the violence with which the wind has burst open the door; and after rearranging your scattered luggage, he retires with noiseless tread.

Then occurs to your excited mind the advisability of extinguishing the light when in the same room with a thief, in order that he may be unable to distinguish the objects which surround him. Obedient to the inspiration, the room immediately becomes enveloped in darkness. Further to defeat

felonious intruders, you rack your brains to discover a suitable hiding-place for your money. Under the pillow it would be scarcely safe, for Indians can remove the very sheet from beneath a sleeping man. Drawers or cupboards there are none to lock it in, and your own boxes are already overstocked. Throwing yourself on the bed to cogitate, oblivion, sweet as ever visited the cradle of infancy, subdues your weary frame. Dreams follow sleep. The door softly opens; a man creeps in; he approaches your bed. The wretch is just going to secure your silence before seizing his ill-sought gains. You leap from your bed, draw your revolver, and wake to the consciousness that it is broad daylight, and that your money is lying where it lay last night—on the table in the middle of the room!

THE "SUPER'S" STORY.

BEFORE I begins, I wishes to say a few words—a sort of prologue-like to my little drama. I aint a-writing this myself: I couldn't, I was never taught. I went to a school once, certainly; but that was only a Sunday one, so o' course writing and all them games is foreign languages to me. A swell gent is a-taking everything as I says down, in the bar parlour of a public next the theatre. He says he's on the press, and he's stood threepenn'orth of Irish hot; and there you have us, he—the swell gent—a-writing as I speaks, and me a-talking and drinking. (Here's your very good health!) Now the overture is over, and up goes the curtain.

I'm a super. I suppose you knows what that is? If you don't, and aint theatrically inclined, I'll tell you. A super's one of them as takes the small parts in a play, where the "business" is important and the "cackle" aint particular. That's a super.

When Shakspeare wrote "A man in his time plays many parts," he must have had a super in his eye, if supers was invented in those days, which I suppose they was, or Shakspeare aint the man I took him for. Bless you! our rôle is unlimited—we does everything. Why, in one piece sometimes I takes a matter of half a dozen parts, if not more. Say "Hamlet" is put up: first I'm a guard a-walking on the ramparts of the castle; then I'm a courtier attending on the king; then I'm a recorder (which aint got

nothing to do with the law, as I thought at one time, but performs on a sort of flute); then I'm a sailor; arter that a mute at Ophelia's funeral; then I'm a soldier again, or a courtier, as the case may be. And there I am. A super's more important than anybody may think. Send a king on without his court, and where would he be? Let Richard the Third enter without his army at his back, and he'd be hissed off for certain. A play is like that bundle of sticks business—taken all of a lump it's firm; part 'em and it's all up. Just you take away the supers from a play, and an audience of babbies wouldn't put up with it.

I gets a shilling a night, and finds my own colour, which, being a saving man, I usually manages to scrape enough up of the waste in the painting room—for in the matter of lime and ochre artists is prodigals; and if I'm hard up for black—for a eyebrow or a moustache, for instance—I gets the needful from the chimney pipe of the stove in the property-room.

I made my first appearance at the Adelphi Garden, at the age of six, as a frog in the pantomime, which was an immense success, and I've been a-going on with great éclat (as I once heard our leading man say) ever since. I've worked my way up to the top of my profession in my line, which is heavy lead of supers; and I've occasion to know that at particular times—say the first night of a new piece—I'm looked up to by the management to carry the play through; and I generally contrives to satisfy the most sanguinary expectations.

I'm proud of my profession. I aint only a actor for the sake of the filthy lucre (which I suppose means coin), but for the literature and art—specially the art. I've studied it—really studied it; you mayn't think so, but it's a fact. Many's the night I've stood at the "wings," when the stage manager weren't nowhere near, a-listening to the play. And in most stock pieces I know where the points ought to be; and if a novice fails to make 'em—which he invariably do—I'm disgusted in proportion. I've served under Edmund Kean, William Macready, and all the stars since. I once fell out with Mr. Macready, because I couldn't remember where to stand at a certain cue. He was very particular about his situations; and one day, at rehearsal, I couldn't think where I ought to be, and I made the same mistake so often that I got flustered. I was young

at the time and rather sudden; so when Mr. Macready, almost out of patience, says—"Stand here, you dolt!" pointing to a place on the stage, I takes a piece of chalk out of my pocket and makes a + just where he wanted me to be; and there I stood looking as cool as a railway clerk, all the while I was as frightened as a amateur. If Mr. M.'s eyes at that identical moment had been daggers, I shouldn't have been telling you this here. I never went on with Mr. Macready after that.

Edmund Kean was different. His way of doing things was just the same "off" and "on." If you didn't please him, you know'd it. I had to take a goblet of wine on to him one time, and I forgot my cue, and kept him waiting. When I *did* go on, he was regular boiling over with rage. He catches me by the collar of my coat and the roomy part of my breeches and pitches me slap off the stage. But he wasn't a bad sort; for after he was done he comes up to me and says he's very sorry for hurting me, and asked me what I'd have to drink.

I've been married, and had one child—a girl—and I'm a widower. I was married young, like most professionals. She was in the third row of the ballet, and inclined to be stout; but she didn't last long, poor soul! she had a apoplectic fit one night, and died in my arms in the green-room. I was very cut up at the time, because she was as good a wife as ever wore a ring.

My darter was as good-looking a girl as you'd meet anywhere; quite different from her mother—not in the beauty line, because she was nice-looking too, but in size. Rose was very thin. She followed in the same steps as my old woman, and I got her an engagement at our theatre. Of course she fell in love—girls always do at that age, seventeen—with as rising a young fellow as I wished to see. I was proud of Rose, and I was glad it turned out so; and what's more, he wasn't ashamed of me, although I was only a super, which made me proud of him too. He was very jealous of Rose, and wanted to take her off the stage and marry her at once; but I objected on the score of age. I asked him to wait a year, till she was a little older, and he took my advice—rather unwillingly, I suspects, if his face was to be believed; but he didn't say so, for he always gave way to me, because I knew what was what better than he did.

One night Rose gets a letter sent round

to her from a gent in the boxes, a-asking her to meet him outside, after the performance. She was very much hurt about it, for it was the first insult she'd received—they gets used to these things in time—and brought the letter to me. Just as I was a-reading it, up comes Charley—that's her young man—and Rose snatches the letter out of my hand, and puts it in her pocket; but not before Charley had seen it. He looks surprised, and he says—

"What's that?" says he.

"Oh, nothing," she says, playful like, and runs away; and he turned away too, but not in the same direction.

When I saw Rose again, I says—

"Why didn't you show it him?" I says.

"Oh, father," she says, "he's so jealous; and if he'd seen it he'd have thrashed the fellow," she says, "and perhaps have got into a row, and I didn't want him to do that."

She give me the letter, for fear he should ask for it; and I put it in my pocket, never a-thinking no more about it.

When work was done for the night, me and two or three others used to take our pipe and pot—which was half-a-pint o' four-penny—at a little pub round the corner, close to the theatre, where we was known and respected. There we used to talk over the events of the evening; and sometimes, when things was slow, we'd even condescend to talk politics, but not often—we left them frivolous subjects to people as hadn't the sense to appreciate art. While we was there that night, in comes a gent rather mopsy; he swaggered up to the counter, and calls for a bottle o' champagne, and then asks us to drink, which we did—we never refuses that. Well, he was a-going on about one thing and another, and at last he says—

"That Rose is a nice girl."

I pricks up my ears at this, and I puts down the glass of champagne as I was just a-rising to my mouth—the glass as he paid for—but I never says nothing. Then he goes on a-boasting, and says as he was a-going to see her home. I jumps up, and I says—

"I'm that lady's father, and if I wasn't a old man I'd knock you down."

Then I turns to my mates and tells 'em of the letter business; and takes it out of my pocket, and hands it to him, and gives him a bit of advice as he wanted. He was in that rage, that he was just a-putting up

his fist to hit me, when Joe Pulter, one of us, floors him. Then we handed him over to a policeman. We was rather excited afterwards, what with having a extra half-pint, and the champagne we drunk afore we knew who we got it from.

Charley used always to see Rose home after the performance, and stay with her till I come; but he wasn't there that night, and Rose said he hadn't come with her as he always did, and laid the blame to the letter. She was naturally cut up about it, and I said—

"I'll tell him how it was in the morning." But she says—

"No!" she says, "if he can't think me true to him without proofs, he sha'n't at all."

I seed it was no use a-arguing with her, so I gives in. My little beauty was very proud, and I liked to see it; but I never thought as how pride would turn love over as it did; although I ought to have known better, a-seeing so often how Pauline had a narrow escape of it.

She was very pale next morning, and her eyes looked like mine do sometimes when I aint got enough water to wash with comfortable, and leaves the colour round under 'em; but it wasn't from that, I knowed, because Rose was a very tidy girl. I never says nothing, but I goes on a-eating and not pretending to notice anything different; and by and by off we goes to the theatre. I was very curious to see what Charley would do; but he only just takes off his hat—Charley always was a gentleman—and turns away again. This here made me feel very queerish, and I didn't know what to make on it.

Things went on in this here unfortunate style for a week. Rose was too proud to explain, although I wanted her to; but no, not her! and there we was. One morning she didn't come down to breakfast as usual, so I goes up to her bed-room and says—

"What's the matter, my beauty?"

"Oh, father!" says she, "I don't feel very well just now. I dare say I shall be all right to-night."

But her hand was a-trembling like a leaf, and her eyes was sunk; and when I come to look at her close, I was staggered to see how she'd altered in them few days.

It flustered me more than I should a-thought; so I gives her a kiss, and tells her to lie down quiet, and off I goes to a doctor. He comes and feels her pulse, and such-like; then he calls me out on the landing, and

says she's in a high state of fever, and must be kept very quiet, or he wouldn't be answerable for it. Then he began a-asking me about myself, and my profession and cetera.

"Not very rich, I suppose?" says he. "Ah, well," he says, "we sha'n't quarrel about the money."

And s'welp me goodness, as I'm standing here, he never charged me a blessed ha'penny for physic or nothing—not a ha'penny—and found the bottles besides.

When Charley sees me by myself, he didn't know what to make on it. He fidgets about me for ever so long, and at last he comes up and askes me where Rose was. I was very short with him, a-treating her as he was, though he didn't know the damage he'd done; so I says, stiff—

"My daughter's at home, sir—not so well as she might be."

"I hope she isn't ill," says he, quick.

"It don't much matter to you," I says, "whether she's ill or not," and I turns away, choking like, a-thinking of my little deserted beauty a-laying so quiet at home.

I hurried back as soon as I could, and goes up to her room; and, God help me! she was in that state she didn't know me, and wanted to know if I'd brought a message from heaven from Charley, as she was certain he was dead, because he hadn't been to see her. I tried to soothe her, but it was no good; there she kept rambling on about one thing and another, a-pretending to be talking to him, and a-telling him not to be sorry, as she'd soon join him. It made me feel queer-like, and moist about the eyes, and I remembered I was a old man, and began to think how I should feel when I was alone.

She lay in this state for a week, a-living chiefly on sop victuals, as I was obliged to force down her throat. It was a hard time—not because the money was short, I didn't mind that; but I couldn't abide to see my darling in pain. I never went near the public then, but hurried home every night as soon as the performance was over, a-hoping always as she'd be better, and would know me again; but she never did till about an hour before it come. It was a Sunday night, at church time. I used to like to think afterwards that my little darling was carried up to Heaven on the sound of the bells, as it died away on the breeze. I was a-sitting quiet at the window, melancholy-like, a-keeping my eye

on Rose to see as she didn't want nothing, and, somehow, the night my poor wife died came into my mind, and I couldn't get rid of the thought nohow. The more I tried, the more it would come. I remembered, as well as if it was yesterday, when I had her in my arms in the green-room, her a-looking up into my face as though she wanted to say something. So I says—

"Is it Rose, Mary?" I says, and she nods and smiles, and I promised as I'd be a kind father to her.

She smiles again at that, and lays her head on my shoulder. Then I see her eyelids a-closing, and that told me that the Great Prompter had rung down her curtain.

I was a-looking out of the window, and I sees somebody turn the corner, and stop in front of the house; but it was a-getting dark, and I couldn't make out who it was—I thought I knew the figure, too. Just as I was a-puzzling myself a-thinking who it could be, I heard my little darling call "Father." I runs to her quick, for it was the first time she'd knowed me since the fever took her. I had such a glad feeling at my heart as I can't tell here—it come so fresh to me after waiting so long, although it seemed to choke me, too, and I couldn't speak at the moment. I sits down by her head, and takes her hand in mine, and there we was, for a matter of a minute or two before either of us said a word, a-looking into each other's faces, joyfuller than we'd been for some time. Then, says she—

"Father," she says, "I want to see Charley."

I says—

"You shall to-morrow, my darling."

"Let me see him to-night, father," she says, beseechingly—"let me see him to-night, because——"

And there she stopped.

I gets up—not having it in me to see her want for anything as I could give her, though I couldn't make out why she was in such a hurry—leastways, I couldn't then; I do now. I puts on my hat, and just outside who should I see a-coming across the road from the other side but Charley himself.

When he knew he was wanted, he runs up faster than I could, and by the time I got in the room, there she was, with her arms round his neck, a-smiling up into his face, and he a-kissing of her, as happy as

birds. So I says nothing; but goes and sits on the stairs outside, a-waiting till they had made it up.

I felt almost jealous of Charley; and I thought—God help me!—as how he would take her away from me as soon as she was well. She *was* took away from me; but not by him—not by him.

I sat there for a matter of half an hour in the dark, when, all of a sudden, Charley gives a cry. I rushes in, and there was my darling, with her head a-laid quiet on his bosom, and her eyes shut; and I could see, by the scared look on his face, that my little beauty would never cheer my poor old heart again.

TABLE TALK.

MR. LLOYD, of the Crystal Palace aquarium, may well grow petulant, and bewail his loss in the papers, when people come and filch his coral. It is too bad, though, and very hard, that the objects in one of the most novel of our London exhibitions cannot be safe from the picking and stealing fingers of the selfish in excelsis. It sets one wishing that the next time the coral fiend—thief, we mean—sticks his fish-hook fingers into a tank, he may catch a crab—literally; or that our friend the curator may be behind him, to "tip-tilt" him into one of the octopus tanks, to be embraced for a pleasant minute beneath the briny. Or, if Mr. Lloyd think this might be too hard treatment, let us suggest a compulsory visit to the conger, of lithe, snake-like form.

A CORRESPONDENT, from Manchester, writes to correct an error in our "Table Talk" a week or two since, with respect to the death of Madame Malibran, which was mentioned as having taken place in London. He says: "Madame Malibran died in Manchester. She was taken ill on Wednesday, September 21st, after singing at the Theatre Royal. She was conveyed to her hotel (the Morley Arms), where she died on Friday, September 23rd, and was interred in the south aisle of the Collegiate Church on Saturday, October 1st, 1836."

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 292.

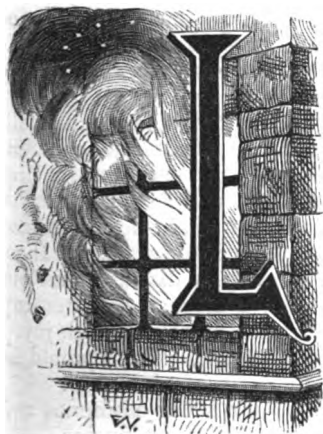
August 2, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XII.

STRUGGLES FOR FREEDOM.



LOUIS RIVIERE paused to wipe the perspiration from his forehead, as he gazed from one to the other of his listeners. Excited by his narrative, he had gesticulated even to acting his part

in the scene he described—rising from his seat, and now taking a step in this direction, now in that; seeming at times to forget that he was not alone.

"Ah!" he continued, "it was a wild time. Pierre leaped from his bed, and stood at my side in an instant, and as we fully awoke to our position, we stood there gazing as it were into the face of death—death in its most horrible form. There seemed to be no escape. Shut in there, and perhaps forgotten, we felt that we should not exist for many minutes longer, for already the air was growing hotter and more stifling.

"Is there no escape?" Pierre whispered, with his lips close to my ear.

"I did not answer, for I could see nothing—nothing but what seemed to me like a black shade standing against the red glow shed by the flames.

"I felt that our time was come, but it did not seem so horrible then; for, forgetting the thirst for freedom that had been upon me

so long, I asked myself what I had to live for. A word from Pierre aroused me though, and the strong yearning came back.

"I rushed to the window, and leaped up to the bars, caught them with my hands and clung there, shaking at them fiercely, and shouting for help.

"I shouted again, more and more loudly—my voice now husky, now shrilling into a scream; for there was no sentry now to strike at my fingers and force me to loose my hold.

"No one came. The roar outside increased, and the reflected light grew brighter. Now and again, too, a fierce flash of flame darted by, as if chasing scores of tiny flying sparks. Then more flames, battling with a very legion of sparks, that seemed to fight with them again, as they darted round and round, in a very whirlwind of ruddy, gold-hued scintillations. Worse and worse, hotter and hotter—flakes, tongues, a very storm of fiery masses flew by the bars, blistering my flesh as I still clung there shrieking for aid.

"But no help came. Our cries seemed to be hurled back red hot in our teeth; and at last, blinded, suffocating, fighting fiercely for every breath of poisoned air we drew, we struggled back to the door.

"It all seems like a dream now, but it was very real. As we reached the door we struck at it with all our little remaining force; dragging at it, and shrieking to the inhuman gaolers who had left us to our fate.

"It could not be far off, that we knew; for already snaky tongues of fire were darting and twining about the bars, licking them one by one, till, as the bright flames passed over them, it seemed to be to leave them red hot. Then came hot puffs of smoke, seeming to be shot in—not wreathing and stealing in, but shot in, as from the mouth of some gun.

"We saw all this with a dreadful distinctness, and, glaring at each other, we seemed to read the thoughts that passed—horrible thoughts!—about what would burning be

like? should we suffer much? or would the smoke and heat mercifully give an insensibility to pain?

"Try—try once more," cried Pierre, hoarsely.

"He need not have spoken, for I was already dragging savagely at the door, but without moving it; and then I sank down, to see Pierre stagger for a moment, and then fall by my side.

"It cannot be long now," I thought, and a thousand old memories began to crowd my brain. But I forced them back, to make way for a thought of life. It was not time yet to die; and placing my face close to the crack at the bottom of the door, I breathed in one long, deep, refreshing draught of cool air.

"That gave me life to point it out to Pierre, who crawled to it and breathed. I placed my face there once more, and drew in hard the breath of life. That breath had thought upon its wings—a bright flash which told me that, though I had battered the door, I had never tried to raise the latch.

"In an instant I had seized it, just as the flames came roaring at the bars of the window.

"The door yielded, and moved widely open. The gaolers had not forgotten us, after all. There was for a moment a gush of pure air, and I fell down panting in the passage, where my breath soon grew less laboured, my temples ceased throbbing, and recollection grew brighter.

"I thought of Pierre. Where was he? He must be lying behind the door.

"I hesitated but for a moment or two to gather breath, and then rushed back into the frightful heat; and there, in the fierce glow, lay poor Pierre.

"I was but just in time; for, as I seized him by one hand and dragged him out, the flames rushed in through the bars, and seemed to chase us out right into the stone corridor, till I had drawn him some distance away.

"The air was hot here; but it revived him. Close to the flags it was free from smoke. His eyes opened, and he struggled to his feet; and then, gaining fresh strength each moment, we ran down passage after passage, up stone steps and down again, seeking an exit, till we stood at a grating, through which rushed into the prison a stream of cold air that was like new life.

"We learned, as we hurried along by

the open doors of the cells, that at the first alarm the gaolers must have slipped back the bolts; and soon after, from the murmur of voices outside, and the clinking of accoutrements, it seemed to us that as the prisoners rushed out of the burning place they were seized, perhaps chained, by the soldiery, to keep them from getting right away.

"We could still hear the crackle and roar of the flames, still see the bright glow; but a fresh, pure breeze rushed in where we stood, recovering us so that in a short time we were hurriedly whispering together; for the same idea had struck us both—now was the opportunity for making our escape.

"As far as we could judge, the portion of the building on our right was burning furiously, while that upon our left was as yet untouched. Over all the roar of flames, and crackle and crash of burning and falling timber, came the shouts and confused voices of the spectators. Our hearts beat high as we listened, and asked ourselves whether that confusion might not be utilized to our purpose, and aid our evasion. If so, the fire was a blessing in disguise, and our narrow escape but a taste of a bitter cup that should afterwards brim over with joy.

"Joy! No, not for me; but I would be free.

"We consulted for a few moments, and then cautiously crept along a passage, one of the maze of corridors in the huge building.

"Empty cells one after the other, and all with grated windows. No escape through either of them, though we ran hastily into each in the hope of finding one whose window might be free from grating; but there was no egress there, and at last we stood at the end of the passage, to find that it was a mere cul de sac.

"We tried another, with the same result—then another—all leading away from the direction of the fire; but, in our ignorance of the building, we could find no exit there.

"We must try towards the fire," said Pierre, hurriedly.

"But the people will be there," I said; "and, besides, there will be the light—we should be seen directly."

"Never mind—we must try," he said.

"We crept hastily along, then, in the new direction—to be stopped before we had gone twenty yards by a deafening crash overhead; and the end of a beam, one mass of

golden fire, came through the passage ceiling, and smoked and sparkled in our way.

"Running back, we tried another passage. Yes, here seemed to be a prospect, and if our object had merely been to get out of the building, it would have been achieved; but that was not all—we wanted freedom; and before we had gone far we were arrested by the sound of voices.

"No, there was no escape that way; and, like rats, we were driven back into the burning building, to try another way, this time upon an upper floor. But here we were met at once by a rush of heated air and smoke. It would have been suffocation to have stayed there a minute, so we descended.

"It was now my turn to advise; so I suggested the lowest floor of the building, as we stood at the head of a flight of stone steps evidently leading to the subterranean cells.

"There might be some way out there, I thought; but ten minutes' wandering in the obscurity, guiding ourselves by the damp walls, had no further result than to bring us up where a dull glow shone through a grating overhead.

"'Could we stay down here till the fire is over,' said Pierre, 'and try afterwards to escape from the ruins?'

"'Where to?—to Heaven?' I said, bitterly; and I pointed to where, dimly seen in the glow from the grating, was what seemed to be a soft wave of grey smoke slowly coming towards us; and in another instant it had driven us back with its stinging, blinding fumes. 'Why, man, even if we could live through that, the place will be a red-hot oven of stones before many hours are passed. Let us try again.'

"We ascended to the level once more, and tried quite a fresh passage; but, upon turning an angle, there, in the ruddy glow of the fire, we saw the entrance, but before it every moment passed soldiers and gaolers, conveying buckets of water.

"A bold rush might, we thought, give us our freedom; but we would not risk it yet, without trying one or two more passages. We tried them, but without result; and at last we stood almost in a state of panic, for the dread of death was seizing us again, and for a time we almost set aside the thought of freedom, as the desire for safety asserted itself.

"It was no wonder, for in all directions

the fire seemed spreading, and hemming us in. Passages that we had before explored were now closed to us by the flame or smoke; and as we stood there, gazing in each other's scorched and blackened faces, it was to read one's own feelings in the flaming eyes.

"But, my friends, it seems to me that our fears, our hopes, our joys, come to us in waves that flood us for the time, and then pass over. Now it is pleasure that comes to us, now sorrow or pain. We suffer it for the time, and then it is gone. Our panic, then—our dread of death, and its urgings to run for safety, merely passed away, and the desire for freedom came once more. We recollected now enough of the great place to be able to find the passage where we had looked out at the gaolers and soldiers with the buckets; and soon we stood there, to find it just the same, only with a brighter light.

"And now, as we stood there watching and listening, we felt how great an excuse we had for our late fear: the noise was now deafening; timbers, walls were falling, and after each crash there was a fiercer roar of the flames; and hurricanes of sparks and golden flakes rushed by, through which the figures at the end of the passage seemed to flit like so many demons.

"Yes, it was now our only hope—a bold rush. We had tried in every direction; and if we stayed longer, it must be to fall victims to the fire, which was increasing every moment. We only waited to see if the confusion would be greater, though from where we stood it was little we could judge."

CHAPTER XIII.

A RACE.

"I DO not think it was more than a minute or two, but it seemed hours, that we stood there screened by the angle of the passage, and waited for an opportunity; till in despair I said to Pierre—

"'Opportunities will not come. We must go. Mind, mon ami, it is for freedom as well as for life.'

"We were Frenchmen—compatriots in misfortune—and as we stood there for a brief moment, we embraced; then, standing motionless to nerve ourselves for the struggle, I cried—

"'Now!'

"I remember that we had taken in our peril at a glance; that we knew we were only about to run into a walled yard that

was light as day, and full of people, all inimical to our safety. But what then? Gates must be open at such a time—there would be a crowd and confusion. Could we not mix with the crowd, and escape in the confusion?

"I remember, too, wishing that we had buckets, so as to appear to be busy with the rest; but the wish was vain, and I gave the signal in what I know was almost a yell, and then we ran.

"It seemed as though we darted from the shadow at one stride into the glare of light in the yard, though we had far to go down the passage. The heat scorched us as we ran, and it was not till then that I realized how great a risk we had run in staying so long within the burning building.

"As we passed into the light we were seen, and greeted with a ringing cheer by those who saw us—a welcome to two men who seemed, to their eyes, like spirits from the dead.

"A dozen ran forward to meet us, evidently with friendly intent; but, as we darted out and ran on, they divined our aim, shouted to us to stop, and the old savage spirit of man's nature rose within them: here was something to hunt down. They were tired of battling with the flames, and they turned to the fresh excitement offered by two prisoners trying to escape.

"It was an exciting scene that: the bright light turning everything, as it were, into gold, save where dense black shadows were cast; the hurrying figures, the motionless crowd of lookers-on, and—most exciting to us—the forms of those who had taken up the pursuit of the two fugitives racing for their liberty.

"We had no idea of locality; but, without a moment's pause, dashed across the yard for where we saw a black opening in the high wall.

"Before we had gone twenty yards, two soldiers seemed to start from the ground right in our way.

"*'Stop!'* they cried.

"But they were armed only with buckets.

"As well might they have cried *'Stop!'* to the furious typhoon. Before the word was well uttered, Pierre had bounded at his stayer, and, without blow or seeming effort, the soldier was on the pavement. Pierre had simply run him down.

"As for my man who barred my way, what will you? I cannot tell how it was,

only that I felt something and heard a heavy fall, and the noise of the bucket rolling over and over upon the stones. They had not stayed us in the least; they had simply stood in our way, when we had redoubled our force, and passed over them: that was all.

"There was another shout, and we saw a crowd in front; but just as we were about to double and turn away, they set up a cheer, and parted right and left for us to pass. They were fellow-prisoners, and their movement forced back their guards, so that we were clear; but crack!—crack!—crack!—there were shots fired at us as we dashed on; and again a soldier stood in front of us as we ran through a second yard, where the lower part was in darkness.

"This man presented a bayonet at us; but with a bound Pierre avoided it, and in a moment had the poor devil in his hug, while I wrested the gun from his hands, and brought down the butt upon his head.

"Poor fellow! he went down like an ox; but he was only stunned, for I did not try to slay. And what would you? Were we not trying for life and freedom?

"There were more shots and shouts behind, but they only seemed to spur us on; and, fortunately for us, the noise and crashing of the falling walls, as they were undermined by the flames, half drowned the tumult raised by our escape.

"We crossed now another yard, with open garden-work about; and in front, lit by the fire, was a great gate, and turrets at the side. There was a soldier here, too, looking towards us and our pursuers.

"He was evidently thinking everything connected with the fire; for had he imagined we were trying to escape, he would have closed the great gates, lately opened for the passage of the engines.

"*'Stand back!'* shouted Pierre, waving his hands to the man—*'more water!—water!—quick!'*

"The sentry, accustomed to obey orders, stepped back mechanically, and in a few seconds we should have been free without further struggle; but there were ominous shouts of *'Stop! stop!'* behind us; and the man recovered from his surprise, and tried to arrest us.

"He was too late. We went at him with all the impulse of our run, and, forgetting his bayonet and musket, sent him rolling over and over, and bounded on.

"There were plenty of black shadows here under the walls of this new courtyard, for there was yet another enclosure before we could be free; and running panting on, we avoided for a time the men who were now hot upon our track. We hoped that they would give up the pursuit, and return to the fire; but no, they pressed on; and as we ran, making now a circuit of the great prison boundary, we heard them still shouting, though they had not gained upon us a yard.

"All this time our eyes were directed to the left, where we saw an open gate; once through which, there would be the open country, if we were not stayed by gathering spectators outside.

"If we had only known our way, we could have been free in half the time; but we had to run blindly, more than once nearly dashing into the very danger we wished to avoid.

"And now, in our despair, panting, our breath coming with a hoarse, tearing noise, we were compelled to double right out into the open space, and make for the farther wall—the last.

"We had so far, for the most part, been hidden by the darkness; but now we were plainly seen, and a series of shouts followed us, wherein we could plainly hear the word 'Surrender!'

"'When I am dead,' I heard Pierre cry, hoarsely; and still on we ran, striving to reach the gateway. At last we neared it—quite a small aperture in the wall, and open, for the catastrophe had pretty well upset all discipline. If we could but gain it! But we were running over soft land—the garden ground of the great prison—and each moment we grew more exhausted.

"Could we reach it?

"Another frantic effort, and we were there, seeming to chase our shadows thrown before us by the burning building. No warder or guard was in our way, and with a bound we were through, uttering a yell of derision at our pursuers—for right in front of us was now freedom in the form of an open space, beyond which seemed to be a great bank of darkness; and if we could once reach that, we knew we should be safe—at all events, for the time.

"Still the shouts and cries; but not a soul in front—every one was at the fire. The pace was very slow now, for we were all

pretty well exhausted, pursuers and pursued; but there was still that cursed light showing our every movement to our enemies; and to be taken now, now that we were free, was too much!

"'For life and freedom, Pierre,' I cried, huskily, keeping step with him in our heavy trot.

"'Yes, mon ami—for freedom,' he cried; and we toiled on.

"Had a single man now appeared in our way, we must have surrendered without an effort; but there was none. The dark wood, too, in front was coming nearer and nearer, and we still panted on and on, till, with a feeble 'Viva!' I reached out a hand to Pierre, and, grasping his, we ran on hand in hand—for the curs had ceased behind: our pursuers had stopped.

"Another moment, and we should reach the wood, when the cause of the halt reached us in the shape of the ringing noise of a volley of musketry.

"I felt a sharp, stinging pain, and then, giving a leap forward, fell upon my face."

THE NEW USE FOR SAND.

IN a paper read at one of the meetings of the Royal Institution, Professor Tyndall gives a very interesting account of the Sand-blast, one of the last new adaptations of nature's works to the service of man. The constant dropping of water will wear a stone; but if that water be largely charged with sand, the wear of the stone will be rapid in the extreme. If, instead of water, air be full of fine sand, and driven with force against a hard body, it literally cuts its way through at a rapid rate.

Speaking of that large statue, the Sphinx of Egypt, Professor Tyndall says it "is nearly covered up by the sand of the desert. The neck of the Sphinx is partly cut across, not, as I am assured by Mr. Huxley, by ordinary weathering, but by the eroding action of the fine sand blown against it. In these cases nature furnishes us with hints which may be taken advantage of in art; and this action of sand has been recently turned to extraordinary account in the United States. When in Boston, I was taken by Mr. Josiah Quincy to see the action of the *sand-blast*. A kind of hopper containing fine silicious sand was connected with a reservoir of compressed air, the pressure being variable at pleasure. The hopper ended in a long slit, from which

the sand was blown. A plate of glass was placed beneath the slit, and caused to pass slowly under it; it came out perfectly depolished, with a bright opalescent glimmer, such as could only be produced by the most careful grinding. Every little particle of sand urged against the glass, having all its energy concentrated on the point of impact, formed there a little pit, the depolished surface consisting of innumerable hollows of this description. But this was not all. By protecting certain portions of the surface and exposing others, figures and tracery of any required form could be etched upon the glass.

"The figures of any open iron-work could be thus copied; while wire gauze placed over the glass produced a reticulated pattern. But it required no such resisting substance as iron to shelter the glass. The patterns of the finest lace could be thus reproduced; the delicate filaments of the lace itself offering a sufficient protection. All these effects have been obtained with a simple model of the sand-blast devised for me by my assistant. A fraction of a minute suffices to etch upon glass a rich and beautiful lace pattern. Any yielding substance may be employed to protect the glass. By immediately diffusing the shock of the particle, such substances practically destroy the local erosive power. The hand can bear without inconvenience a sand-shower which would pulverize glass. Etchings executed on glass with suitable kinds of ink are accurately worked out by the sand-blast. In fact, within certain limits, the harder the surface, the greater is the concentration of the shock, and the more effectual is the erosion. It is not necessary that the sand should be the harder substance of the two; corundum, for example, is much harder than quartz; still, quartz-sand can not only depolish, but actually blow a hole through a plate of corundum. Nay, glass may be depolished by the impact of fine shot; the grains in this case bruising the glass before they have time to flatten and turn their energy into heat.

"And here, in passing, we may tie together one or two apparently unrelated facts. Supposing you turn on, at the lower part of a house, a cock which is fed by a pipe from a cistern at the top of the house, the column of water, from the cistern downwards, is set in motion. By turning off the cock, this motion is stopped; and when the turning off is

very sudden, the pipe, if not strong, may be burst by the internal impact of the water. By distributing the turning of the cock over half a second of time, the shock and danger of rupture may be entirely avoided. We have here an example of the concentration of energy in time. The sand-blast illustrates the concentration of energy in space. The action of flint and steel is an illustration of the same principle. The heat required to generate the spark is intense, and the mechanical action being moderate, must, to produce fire, be in the highest degree concentrated. This concentration is secured by the collision of hard substances. Calspar will not supply the place of flint, nor lead the place of steel, in the production of fire by collision. With the softer substances, the total heat produced may be greater than with the hard ones; but to produce the spark, the heat must be intensely localized.

"But we can go far beyond the mere depolishing of glass; indeed, I have already said that quartz-sand can wear a hole through corundum. This leads me to express my acknowledgments to General Tilghman, who is the inventor of the sand-blast. To his spontaneous kindness I am indebted for some beautiful illustrations of his process. In one thick plate of glass a figure has been worked out to a depth of $\frac{1}{4}$ ths of an inch. A second plate, $\frac{1}{2}$ ths of an inch thick, is entirely perforated. Through a circular plate of marble, nearly half an inch thick, open-work of the most intricate and elaborate description has been executed. It would probably take many days to perform this work by any ordinary process; with the sand-blast it was accomplished in an hour. So much for the strength of the blast; its delicacy is illustrated by a beautiful example of line engraving, etched on glass by means of the blast.

"This power of erosion, so strikingly displayed when sand is urged by air, renders us better able to conceive its action when urged by water. The erosive power of a river is vastly augmented by the solid matter carried along with it. Sand or pebbles caught in a river vortex can wear away the hardest rock—'potholes' and deep cylindrical shafts being thus produced. An extraordinary instance of this kind of erosion is to be seen in the Val Tournanche, above the village of this name. The gorge at Handeck has been thus cut out. Such waterfalls were once frequent in the val-

leys of Switzerland; for hardly any valley is without one or more tranverse barriers of resisting material, over which the river flowing through the valley once fell as a cataract. Near Pontresina, in the Engadin, there is such a case; the hard gneiss being worn away to form a gorge through which the river from the Morteratsch glacier rushes. The barrier of the Kirchet above Meyringen is also a case in point. Behind it was a lake, derived from the glacier of the Aar, and over the barrier the lake poured its excess of water. Here the rock, being limestone, was in great part dissolved; but added to this we had the action of the sand particles carried along by the water, each of which, as it struck the rock, chipped it away like the particles of the sand-blast. Thus, by solution and mechanical erosion, the great chasm of the Fensteraar-schlucht was formed. It is demonstrable that the water which flows at the bottom of such deep fissures once flowed at the level of what is now their edges, and tumbled down the lower faces of the barriers. Almost every valley in Switzerland furnishes examples of this kind; the untenable hypothesis of earthquakes, once so readily resorted to in accounting for these gorges, being now for the most part abandoned. To produce the Cañons of Western America, no other cause is needed than the integration of effects individually infinitesimal."

A NIGHT AT CASTLE KEVIN.

"MISS BLENKINSOP, I shall write and ask for Mrs. Morgan's situation."

School was over, and we—Miss Blenkinsop and I, her junior teacher—were together in her sanctum, the little room behind the dining-room of Polyglot House. I at my open desk—paper, ink, blotting-book ranged in order before me; between my fingers a pen, with which I was fidgeting nervously. My mistress opposite to me, knitting in hand, spectacles on nose. She laid down the four shining needles, with the grey worsted stockings depending from them, took off her spectacles and wiped them deliberately, then put them on again, and gazed at me for one silent moment.

"Helen Wacie," she said, at last, "I wanted to see if you had suddenly gone crazy; but you look much the same as usual, quiet, collected, sensible—for a chit of nineteen.

As you're not laughing, I suppose you don't intend a joke; so if you'll tell me what you do mean, I'll be obliged to you."

"This Lady Winifred is not much younger than myself," I answered, "and I'm hardly competent—"

"Competent—fiddlesticks! Do you suppose I'd let you teach the girls here if you were not competent? And as for your youth, why that's just what the Countess wants; not merely a governess, but also a cheerful companion for her daughter—these are her very words. Cheerful, indeed! her ladyship would think you mighty cheerful if she saw you now. I must say, my dear, you are not behaving well; after the trouble I have taken to procure this engagement for you; but I'm an old fool to expect gratitude—an old fool, who ought to know better by this time!"

In a moment I was kneeling by my friend's side, her kind old hand clutched in my firm young one, and wet with my penitent tears.

"Oh, child, take care. Look now, I've dropped a stitch. I declare you're just a baby. What in the name of foolishness made you think of going to Llan—Llan—what do you call the place? I never could remember those Welsh names. Mrs. Morgan wants a governess, she says; the truth is she wants a maid of all-work, with a knowledge of French and music. You would be a mere drudge."

"But there are only those two situations," I said.

"Only those two? Why, my dear, there are plenty better than that Welshwoman's, at all events. If not, Heaven help the governesses! 'Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief.' I don't wish to be unchristian; but really she is one."

"Those others are such grand people," I urged. "And oh, Miss Blenkinsop! I don't like going to Ireland."

"Nonsense, Helen! Lords and ladies are very much like other folks, as you'll find; and the Irish may be savages, but they're not cannibals—they won't eat you. Get up, now, and write to Lady Conyngton. Why, bless the child, she has pulled off the feathers, and bitten the nib! Take another, my dear, and don't spoil that too. Pens cost something, you know."

I wrote my letter, and in due time received a gracious reply, requesting me to be at Castle Kevin as soon as possible. So I packed up my small belongings, bade a

sorrowful farewell to Miss Blenkinsop and the girls—I had few other friends to part from—and went on my solitary way to my new home in the south-west of Ireland.

The first view of it disappointed me exceedingly. I had expected to see a real feudal castle, like those of which I had read in Sir Walter Scott's novels, with moat and battlements, portcullis and drawbridge complete. What I did see was a big, irregular house, time-worn and weather-beaten; so clothed with lichen, moss, and ivy, as to seem less the handiwork of man than a portion of the wild nature around it.

But as some faces, at first sight rugged and unlovely, grow upon us when we learn to know them, so this ancient dwelling grew upon me, until I found beauty in its very irregularity. Oh, modern architects of eligible villas and commodious eight-roomed family residences, how you would have been disgusted at the amount of space wasted in that great rambling mansion—wasted utterly on passages branching off to nowhere in particular, staircases by which nobody ever seemed to go up or down, and musty closets given over to the rats. To those non-rent-paying tenants were also abandoned sundry unoccupied rooms, wherein they gnawed, squeaked, and scampered to their hearts' content.

With one exception, I found the human inhabitants of Castle Kevin very much like other folks, as Miss Blenkinsop had prophesied. The Earl was commonplace and pompous, the Countess was commonplace and fussy, Lady Winifred—No; I won't call her commonplace—my dear little pupil, of whom I was so fond. Still, I must confess that there was nothing very remarkable about her. Her elder sister, Lady Jane, was, on the contrary, quite unlike any one I had ever seen before. She was wonderfully beautiful, everybody owned that—the men who admired her, and the women who envied her. She could also, when she chose, be very fascinating; but she did not always choose, for she had a temper as variable and uncertain as the Irish skies above Castle Kevin—and that is saying a good deal.

During the autumn the old house was filled with guests, whose gay presence completely metamorphosed it. Among them was a young and wealthy baronet—Sir Hugh Shafto—to whom Lady Jane was engaged. They were to be married in a few months.

The winter set in early, and with a severity very uncommon in that part of Ireland. One night, at bedtime, snow was falling, and in the morning it lay several inches deep. Winifred begged for a holiday, and signified her intention of constructing a snow-image in the west garden—a sheltered spot near the school-room window.

"Not a horrid man," she said, "like the one my cousins made last Christmas—with an old hat on and a pipe in his mouth; but a lovely, graceful statue. I'm afraid the features will be troublesome—the nose, for instance; still the general effect shall be good. Hugh and Jane have promised to help me, and so has Mr. Cardigan."

Sir Hugh and Mr. Cardigan were the only visitors remaining, and they intended leaving early the following morning. I had taken cold, and could not venture out; so I sat at the window and watched the merry quartette at work. Snow is not the best material for a statue, nor were they very efficient sculptors; however, they succeeded in raising a figure—not exactly lovely or graceful, yet rather less uncouth than such things generally are. Then Winifred—the little romp—flung a snowball at Mr. Cardigan, who chased her with cries of vengeance, until they were both out of sight and hearing.

Lady Jane and Sir Hugh Shafto lingered yet awhile in the garden. What a pretty picture they made! She in her scarlet cloak, the hood of which was drawn over her head, forming such a charming setting for her fair, smiling face; he looking down proudly at her, one of her hands clasped in his. Presently, with an air of ownership, he placed the little hand upon his arm, and they walked slowly away. The low murmur of their voices just reached me. Ah, how pleasant life was for them, I thought. I did not grudge them their happiness; but being quite alone, and somewhat weary, I turned from the window with a wistful sigh.

In the evening, when Winifred had left me, I settled myself luxuriously by the school-room fire, with a book that I had found in the library—a collection of legends, containing many illustrations of an uncanny and gruesome nature. I had become absorbed in a particularly horrible story, when I was startled by a light, cold touch upon my shoulder; and, turning round, I saw that Lady Jane had entered noiselessly, and was standing behind me.

She laughed mischievously.

"How nervous you are, Miss Wacie," she said. "I have really terrified you; and as I have come to ask a favour, that was very bad policy. May I stay here with you for awhile? This is a far cosier place than the drawing-room, and will be better still if we put out the lamp and content ourselves with the firelight. Oh, I'm so tired of those people!"

Those people! There were no guests except Mr. Cardigan and Sir Hugh Shafto; and this was her lover's last night at Castle Kevin.

"Will they not miss you?" I asked.

She drew herself up haughtily.

"Whether they miss me or not is entirely my own affair. If you do not desire my company, that is, of course, another matter."

I by no means desired it. Lady Jane was apparently in one of her strange moods; and, besides, I felt sure that her parents would be annoyed, and Sir Hugh grieved by her absence. However, I could only say that she was welcome, hoping, even while I uttered the polite falsehood, that somebody might be sent in search of her. But no one came.

She extinguished the lamp, stirred the fire into a blaze, and seated herself opposite to me. I had laid my book on the table, and she took it up.

"What have you been reading?" she asked. "Goblin stories, to judge by the pictures. Do you believe in ghosts, Miss Wacie?"

I—lately imported from the matter-of-fact atmosphere of Polyglot House—believe in ghosts! I denied all supernatural fears, with perhaps unnecessary vehemence.

Lady Jane smiled a little mocking smile that nettled me.

"That is well," she said, "for of course this house is haunted; and if you do happen to meet the ghost—or ghosts rather, for there are two of them—you won't mind. You know that door on the left hand of the passage near your bed-room?"

The door in question opened upon a staircase leading to some rooms that Winifred and I had explored one wet afternoon. They were mere dilapidated garrets, containing only some worm-eaten furniture, put there to be out of the way. In the farthest of them we found a small door, secured by rusty bolts, which we drew back with much difficulty. It gave access to a narrow platform on the roof—a dangerous standing-

place, for it had no parapet nor protection of any kind; and I hastened to re-enter the garret, pulling my pupil in with me. I told this to Lady Jane.

"It is there that the ghosts walk," she said. "Winnie does not know of their existence, or she would certainly have avoided their territory. But you shall hear their story if you like.

"The Lord Conyngton of Charles the First's time married a young Frenchwoman of noble family—Gabrielle de St. Meurice by name—one of the ladies who had accompanied Queen Henrietta Maria to England. She was very lovely—I must show you her picture; it is in the Blue Chamber, the room Sir Hugh occupies at present—and the earl almost idolized her; but he was jealous, and could not bear to witness the attention she received from the courtiers, especially from a French marquis, her cousin, to whom it was reported she had formerly been attached. So he brought her to this lonely place—lonelier than now, and dangerous too; for in those days the Irish were wild folks indeed. The petted court favourite pined in her solitude; but Lord Conyngton had her all to himself, and, for a time, was content. By degrees, however, his suspicions revived. He watched her almost unceasingly, and at last his vigilance was rewarded.

"One winter's night, while wandering about, he saw footsteps in the newly fallen snow—a man's footsteps—and traced them to a part of the house where the ivy, which grew thick and strong, was torn, and some of its leaves scattered over the white ground. He returned to the house, and in one of those old rooms found his wife with her cousin, who had climbed up by the ivy, and entered through the small door opening on the roof. He now attempted to escape by the same way; but Lord Conyngton followed, and grappled with him on the narrow platform. The marquis fought for his life; but his opponent was stronger, and, after a brief struggle, flung him into the courtyard below.

"When the enraged husband returned to where Gabrielle lay cowering on the floor, there was that in his face that made her rise and flee from him; but he overtook her, and stabbed her, heedless of her cries and prayers, and her arms clinging around him.

"Long afterwards some letters were found which entirely proved the poor lady's inno-

cence, showing that she had met her kinsman only to arrange some plan of escape from her weary life here to her relations in France. Upon this discovery, Lord Conyngton, overcome by remorse, entered a monastery, where he died; and as he left no children, the title and estates passed to our branch of the family. But his spirit and Gabrielle's still haunt the scene of the tragedy; and she has often been heard crying, as on that dreadful night, for 'Mercy—mercy!'

"As for the ghost part," said I, "I don't believe a word of it. But was Lord Conyngton suffered to go unpunished for that double murder?—was there no inquiry?"

"History is silent on that point," said Lady Jane; "but I don't suppose there was a coroner's inquest. Crime was too easily hushed up in those good old times—especially here in Ireland, where people seemed to do very much as they liked."

We remained silent for a while—Lady Jane gazing into the fire, I watching her, and thinking how beautiful she looked. She was dressed in white—no colour about her but her blue eyes, her masses of dark hair, and an ornament that hung low upon her neck—a diamond-encircled opal—that glowed and flashed in the firelight. It was a present from Sir Hugh; and there came to my remembrance an old superstition respecting opals—that they are unlucky stones, bringing misfortune to those who wear them. Costly though the jewel was, I should scarcely have liked so ominous a love token.

We were aroused from our reverie by the sound of a clock striking twelve. Lady Jane started.

"How late it is!" she exclaimed. "I suppose every one has gone to bed. I told Lisette not to sit up for me. Yes," she continued, looking out into the corridor—"the place is quite dark, and they have forgotten to bring a candle for me. Let me go with you to your room, Miss Wacie; you can light those on your toilette table and give me that one."

As we passed the Blue Chamber, we saw the firelight gleaming through the partly open door.

"Sir Hugh must be in the smoking-room with papa," said my companion; "he is sure not to disturb us, so come and look at Countess Gabrielle's portrait."

She entered, drawing me in with her; and taking the candle from my hand, held it so that the light fell full on the painting, which hung above the mantelpiece, and certainly merited a more honourable place than that seldom-used apartment. The poor Countess must have been very lovely; but what struck me most forcibly was the likeness between her pictured face and the uplifted face of Lady Jane. Both had the exquisite Greek contour, the blue eyes and shadowy hair; but with these the resemblance ceased, for the living beauty's marble-white cheeks and somewhat haughty expression formed a decided contrast to the peach-like bloom and winsome smile of the ill-fated Gabrielle.

Our progress seemed destined to interruption. When we reached the door of the haunted staircase, Lady Jane stopped and opened it.

"You give no credence to ghost stories, Miss Wacie," she said; "yet I think you would hardly go alone as far as that landing, even though I waited for you here."

Coward that I was, I feared her ridicule. I ran quickly up the steps, and had just reached the landing, when the light disappeared from below, the door was shut violently, and I heard Lady Jane's mocking laugh as she sped away, leaving me in darkness and terror. For a moment I stood trembling, irresolute, waiting as it were for some dreadful vision; then I rushed down, flung myself against the door, managed—I know not how—to unfasten it, and flew to my own room, a very haven of safety. Its air of snugness, the cosy fire on its hearth, were reassuring; and ere long I was able to laugh at my foolish fears, and her ladyship's somewhat ill-natured trick. I hastened to get into bed—first, as was my habit, drawing back the window curtains—and, being very tired, I soon fell asleep.

I woke with a weight of horror upon me—woke, and started up. The moon was shining into my room, and before me, where its light fell clearest, stood—what was it? A white-robed figure, with long dark hair flowing about it like a veil, with weird, bright eyes, with something upon its breast that sparkled in the moonbeams. It moved, came nearer and nearer, came quite close; touched me with a soft, cold touch; and then I saw that it was Lady Jane. Only Lady Jane! but could any visitant from a mysterious other world have been more terrible than that living, breathing creature, with

whom I had talked familiarly a little while before?

An utter powerlessness came over me. I tried to scream, to speak, to whisper. I tried to shrink away from her, but in vain; though she held a long, sharp knife, and that and her dress, and her hands—yes, the very hand that touched me—were stained with the awful stain of blood.

At length she spoke, in a low, monotonous voice—

“Come with me. You are not afraid—you told me you were not afraid, and I want your help.”

I could not ask “for what?” And she continued—

“I have avenged her! She will never wander in the cold any more, wailing and beseeching. It is life for life; and now she will rest, after all these weary years. But come, the moon is going down, and there must be light for what we have to do.”

I rose mechanically, and stood beside her; then she closed round my wrist a grasp like ice and iron, and led me—whither? Along the dim corridor, past the haunted staircase, to the Blue Chamber.

I might have swooned before a less horror, or fled from it with cries and lamentations. As it was, I gazed silently before me, where upon the quaintly carved bed, lay Sir Hugh Shafto, dead—stabbed to the heart by her whom he had loved best in all the world! I turned and looked at her, and seeing her smile of mocking triumph, knew the truth—Lady Jane was mad! She released my hand, flinging it from her impatiently, and signed that I should aid her. Taking the rich silken coverlet, she spread it upon the floor. Then we raised him—that passive thing, so lately full of life and health—and laid him on it, she folding it over him, and covering the quiet face. She had the strength of insanity; and as for me, I seemed incapable of feeling either pain or fatigue. We lifted our dread burden, and re-entered the corridor, our footsteps falling noiselessly on the soft, thick carpet. How still the house was! A clock somewhere uttered its measured tick, tick; and between the sounds there seemed ages of agony. Oh, if those sleepers by whose rooms we were passing could only know! Oh, that they would awake, that a door would open, that anything would happen to save me from that fearful dead presence, and from the living presence more fearful a thousandfold! I

endeavoured to recall instances of which I had heard or read, when ready wit and presence of mind had defeated lunatic cunning; but I could remember nothing, could do nothing but obey the beautiful murderess, and follow wherever she might lead me.

We descended the stairs, and went across the hall, and along another corridor into the school-room. Oh, strange, to enter that homely place—the scene of daily work, and study, and light-hearted talk—bearing a thing so ghastly!

I felt no surprise, then, that our progress was quite unimpeded. The doors, placed at intervals to exclude the draughts, had all stood open, and the French window of the school-room was open also. We passed through it into the west garden. There was the snow figure, rendered almost shapeless by the additional snow that had fallen upon it during the evening. We laid him down near it—him who, a few hours before, had been the merriest of a merry party—as insensible now to love, and joy, and sorrow as the perishable image he had helped to raise.

Then a look of indecision came into Lady Jane's face. She glanced about restlessly, as if seeking for something.

“I had forgotten,” she muttered. “We must go and get them.”

My heart beat wildly with the hope of escape. I struggled to speak, and at last found words.

“Will it not be best for me to remain here while you bring what is wanted?”

The watchful cunning returned to her eyes.

“There is no need,” she said. “Who would harm him now? Has he not paid the penalty?”

She once more took my hand, and drew me with her, by heavy clumps of evergreens, across broad unbroken sheets of moonlit snow, under leafless trees that cast a shadowy network on the white ground, into the deeper shadow of a high wall, against which was the gardeners' tool-house. She groped about there until she found two spades, the smaller and lighter of which she gave to me. Then she led me back to the west garden, and bade me “work.”

Strange workers!—strange and awful work!

In a flower-plot, that during the summer had been gay with many-hued blossoms, we dug a grave, without much difficulty—the

earth was so soft under the snow; and there we laid him.

But first Lady Jane knelt by his side, and uncovered his face. Did she remember? Did she see in it the face of her lover? For a moment, I think, yes—so gently did she bend over him, so tenderly did she kiss the pale lips and brow before hiding them from her sight for ever.

Our task was done, and we returned to the house, which was still quite silent. When we were near my room, Lady Jane paused, suffering me to proceed alone. I turned on reaching the threshold, and saw her white dress gleaming through the dimness—almost fancied I could see her cruel, glittering eyes.

I hastened to shut her out, locked the door with trembling fingers, and then fell senseless upon the floor.

When I came to myself I was in my own bed, with bright-faced Honor Murphy, our Irish school-room maid, beside me, patting and smoothing the coverlet.

"Did I wake you, miss? Sure, I couldn't lave you that way, with the clothes all off you, an' such a frost as there was in the night. No wondher for you to have a cough! A bitter cowl'd mornin' it was for Sir Hugh to be goin'."

"Sir Hugh," I said, bewildered—"Sir Hugh Shafto?"

"Glory be to goodness, miss!—don't look at me that way. One 'ud think 'twas a ghost ye saw—the saints presarve us! Didn't ye know Sir Hugh was lavin' to-day? There was Lady Jane up to see him off, an' it almost dark.

"'Honor,' says she to me, 'don't call Miss Wacie this mornin'. Let her sleep,' says she, 'for I kep' her up talkin' last night.'

"'Very well, my lady,' says I.

"An' I'm thinkin' it's few lessons Lady Winifred will do this day. She's cryin' her eyes out afther Sir Hugh. He's as good as a brother to her; an' sure it's her brother he'll be yet—leastways, her brother-in-law, which is the same thing, barrin' the law. But what's the matter with you, miss? Sure, you're as white as the sheet. Is it sick you are?—or maybe you've been dhramin'?"

"Yes, Honor," I said, "it *was* a dream, I think."

"Then, never mind it, miss. There was

me own cousin, Tim Mahony, he dhramed three nights runnin' that there was a crock of gould buried undher the wall of his cabin. So what does he do but goes an' pulls it down—the purtiest little cabin in the counthry it was. Well, miss, sorra a crock, full or empty, did he find afther all his diggin'; an' there's his wife, honest woman, an' the childer, with no roof to spake of over their heads, an' such weather as it is; while Tim won't do a hand's turn of work, on'y rootin' about the place.

"'Sure the gould must be somewhere,' says he; 'didn't the dhrame tell me about it?'

"'Dhrame, indeed! Bad luck to 'em for dhrames, bothern' people when they're asleep and haven't their sinses about them.'"

A short time ago I saw Lady Jane Shafto and her husband, and was introduced to the little son and heir, of whom, I need hardly say, they are both wonderfully proud. My dear pupil, Winifred, is at the old place in Ireland; but I am no longer her governess, nor anybody's, indeed—except, perhaps, Charlie's: he certainly needs keeping in order sometimes.

Assuredly our house is not haunted, it is much too bright and new for that, and I have abjured ghost stories for ever; yet now and then, when I'm alone in the evening, waiting for Charlie to come home, I shiver and look around me fearfully as I remember that terrible night at Castle Kevin.

SIL DONNAGHAN THE PIPER.

CHAPTER I.

MISS FLAHERTY ENTERTAINS A VISITOR.

TWILIGHT was fast drawing on; the rain was coming down steadily in a thick drizzle, and the sullen, grey clouds looked as if they were quite determined not to clear up.

The high road from Dublin to Wicklow was a dismal sight. Wherever there was not a pool of water, there was a mass of slimy, liquid mud. Miss Gretta Flaherty, who had a little shop at the side of the road, sat behind her rickety counter mending an old blanket. She was a little woman, about sixty-three. Her face was small, pinched, and pale; her eyes, when you saw them without their spectacles, seemed watery and washed out; her thin, grey hair was neatly tucked

away under a large, deep-bordered muslin cap; and she wore a three-cornered little shawl over her shoulders. There was something plaintive, something pathetic about the poor soul. Life had been a struggle with her; she had been worn out trying to make the best of things which had obstinately refused to be made even decently good.

Miss Flaherty had come of decent people; but her father and her two big brothers had taken to the "drop;" and often after she had helped the roaring, stupid bullies up to bed, she would take her seam, and sigh sometimes between the stitches. So it had gone on: she had always been sighing between the stitches. If joy ever chanced to look through her window, it had always been snuffed out. Miss Flaherty was now alone, and her little shop had something in it like herself—something of the same frail, solitary air, and yet as if it were making a desperate effort to put a good face on things. It was a tiny affair, that shop—two good-sized men would have been cramped in it. A cord was hung from end to end, and on this was suspended a line of penny ballads. On the counter underneath were some cheap toys, a basketful of damp, sickly biscuits, and another of gingerbread. In the window were a few glasses, filled, some with barley sugar, some with clay pipes, and some with bulls'-eyes. These, together with a few dozen of green apples, constituted Miss Flaherty's stock-in-trade. A most tempting show it was to the ragged children who lived in the lane behind. They often stood before the window, halfpenny in hand, tossed about in a perfect agony of longing and doubt. But on this wet evening there would certainly be no little customers. The clock struck eight. Miss Flaherty snuffed her dip candle and looked out into the road: rain and mud, mud and rain, were all that could be seen there.

"I suppose I may as well shut up and go to bed," she thought, as she laid down her spectacles; but she had hardly done so, when a knock came to the door, and a voice cried—

"God save all here!"

"Who's that?" exclaimed the spinster, nimbly tripping to the door.

"It's me—Sil Donnaghan the piper."

"Holy Vargin!" exclaimed Miss Flaherty, as she surveyed the tall, dripping figure before her, "and is it yerself, Mither Donnaghan? Sure, I've often heard tell of you and your

pipes. Why ye'll be drowned, man alive! Step in—step in, and take an air ov the fire."

"It's just that same I was thinkin' of. I've footed it twenty weary miles from the fair of Tinakely this blessed day; and I was goin' on to the Coach and Horses beyant, for a night's lodgin'; but whin I got to the corner of the Windy Gap, I was that beat that I said to meself, 'Sure, isn't that Miss Flaherty's bit ov a light glintin' at me for all the world like the eye of a friend; and didn't I know her big brother, Barney, whin he was the hoigth of the table; and wouldn't it be a quare thing if she didn't lit me dhry me weary ould bones, and shake the wet out ov me big coat?'"

"Ah, thin, Mr. Donnaghan, will ye not be talkin' out there, wid the rain pourin' down on yez like a water-spout? Come into the kitchen, and I'll get yez a cup of tay that'll warm yer heart."

Sil, thus invited, walked heavily across the tiny shop, and soon stretched himself at full length on a straw chair in Miss Flaherty's modest little kitchen. The fire was composed of a few cinders and one nearly burnt-out piece of coal; but Miss Flaherty's soul was red-hot with hospitality: on went the whole contents of her coal-heap; on, too, went a famous log of wood, which soon began to crackle and blaze. Then filling her kettle, the little woman set it on to boil, and laid out her tea things. While this kettle is simmering we may take a glance at the piper.

He was a long-limbed man, spare and thin, with a slight stoop in his shoulders. There was nothing Milesian about his face—a face which, like his fingers, was long and bony; the nose pointed downwards in a long curve. There was something thoughtful and intent about him, and yet at the same time placid and serene. His music seemed to have got into his face—there was a hushed look about it; and he seemed as if he were always listening. He now kept his pipes near him, and glanced down at them occasionally: it was a glance that a mother might give to a sleeping child.

Meanwhile, Miss Flaherty had brought out a crock of flour and a cup of buttermilk, and was busy in the corner mixing up the dough into a cake. Then she whipped out a griddle, and, in a trice, the four quarters were cut, and browning away on the fire—to use her own expression, "illigant."

"Faix, it's taking too much throuble ye are for me, intirely," said Sil, as he watched this last proceeding.

"Is it throuble?" cried Miss Flaherty. "Sure, I'd do more nor that for the greatest omadhawn that iver stepped, let alone yerself; and it's I that am raal sorry I haven't something betther for ye—maybe a bit of a rasher, or a couple of fresh herrins. But the times is changed!"

And she heaved a sigh.

"Ye may well say that," answered Sil. "It's thrue for yez—changed they are indeed."

"Many's the time," continued the spinster, as she recklessly threw her whole stock of tea into the brown earthenware teapot, and set it on the hob to draw—"many's the time I've seen the mail stand there beyant, and two or three fine tandems, and as many more jauntin' cars alongside ov it; and it's often the gay gossoons 'ud be runnin' in here for apples, and pipes, and what not; but now thim trains do be drawin' all the quality off the road, and often, whin I look out in the evenin', sorra a sound do I hear, and not a sight but the black, black darkness."

"And thin, wid respect to the dancin', Miss Flaherty—wid respect to the dancin', this counthry's not what it was at all, at all. Whin I used to tchune up me pipes, the gay girls and boys 'ud be all crowdin' round me, mad wid pure joy, and all shakin' and fidgetin' to begin, and shake the stiffness out of their toes; but now it's a waltz, or a polka, or a fine grand quadrille they do be wantin'. Bad cess to thim, the sperrit is not what it was at all! Yer tay's fine and black, Miss Flaherty, ma'am, and I drink yer very good health; and that ye may niver be sick or sorry, I pray God. Ye do be lonesome here in the evenins, I'll go bail."

"Well, I don't say but I am whin no one drops in, and the childer stop pullin' at the door, and the wheels, such as they are, have gone by, and the cowl'd blast sweeps down the gap and rattles at the windys. Thin I do get thinkin', and too much thinkin' isn't good for any ov us. Take another cake, man alive—sure, they're cryin' out to be 'aten; and don't spare the butther or sugar. There's plinty more where they come from, and it's yerself that must be footsore and famished ather yer long tramp."

"I'm a'most done, ma'am, thank ye kindly," said the piper. "And are none

ov yer people to the fore—Mary, the nate, purty colleen that she was; and big Barney; and Bill, that was as fine a young spalpeen as iver shook a shillelagh in his fist?"

"They're all gone. Mary and Barney's dead, and Bill's in Amerikey, and as good as dead, for sorra a word does he iver write to me."

And here Miss Flaherty's lip quivered.

"They tell me ye're a grand man at the pipes, Misther Donnaghan."

"Well, I don't say but I can tchune up now and thin wid the best ov thim. But masha! the cowl'd sometimes gits round me ould fingers, and the devil a bit will the weary notes come as they ought to. But now that I'm warm, maybe it's a tchune ye'd be likin' to raise yer heart a bit; and if that's it, I'm yer man."

And so saying, Sil shook the crumbs off the knees of his threadbare pantaloons, and finished his last mug of tea with much apparent relish.

"I'd like a tchune well," said Miss Flaherty. "Sure, it 'ud mind me of the gay time when I footed it at the fair ov Wicklow wid the best ov thim. Well, well—I shall niver 'cover the buckle' agin. Can ye play 'The old woman stroking her cat,' or 'Whisht, the cat from under the table'? Thim was fine rousing jigs in my day."

"If it's cats ye're thinkin ov, I'll give ye the grandest tchune ye iver heard. 'Caith na brogueen' is the name ov it—that's to say, 'Puss in brogues.'"

Sil accordingly rested his pipes between his knees, and an eager light came into his eye—he had only one, and that was not first-rate for seeing; but when the beloved sounds began, it seemed all too small to hold the light that started into it. He spread an old silk handkerchief on one knee, nursed his pipes for a minute or two, touched them tenderly here and there, and, after a few preliminary notes, was fairly under weigh, beating time regularly with one foot on the floor, while a calm, intense satisfaction stole into his face. Everything in him seemed to be listening. He was so absorbed in his own music, that he was utterly forgetful of all besides—he was in a land of dreams. This tune appeared to be a description of a furious hunt, the "racing and chasing on Cannobie lea" was nothing to it—first, there was a dashing and a rushing; then a fierce shriek; then more rushing and rampaging, and tearing along; then there seemed to

be a panting, a struggle, a howl, more rushing, more rampaging, more tearing furiously along; then a stop, a faint cry, a twittering up in the air, and it was over.

Sil laid down his pipes slowly, as if he was sorry that there was no more.

"That's an illigant tchune," said Miss Flaherty, wiping her eyes, that had become a little dimmed at the sound of the well-known pipes—"that's an illigant tchune intirely, Misther Donnaghan; an' will ye tell me why it is called 'Puss in brogues'?"

"Faith! that's what I couldn't have done this time sivin year; but wance, whin I was playin' it afore a lot ov grand quality, a jintleman came out, and sez he—

"'Do ye know the story of that tchune ye're afther playin'?"

"'Divil a bit,' sez I.

"'Well, I'll read it to yez,' sez he.

"And wid that he lugs out a big book, and reads about a man they call Larry Roche, and how he had a big black tom-cat, the quarest and the fiercest baste that ever lapped milk. Well, it happened that one day Larry had a fine gould sovereign gev him, and he got talkin' ov buyin' a good pair ov brogues wid it.

"'And a rattling pair for yerself a chorra,' sez he to the wife.

"'Ay, daddy, and another pair for me,' shouted young Larry.

"'And another for me,' cried Thady.

"'And another for me,' chuckled Charley.

"'Ay, and two pair for me!' cried the black cat, spakin' in an awful sort of a voice from the hob, and breakin' out into a horrid laugh.

"'And what business have you wid brogues?' asks Larry, lettin' on to be brave; but his knees knockin' together with pure fright all the time.

"'Ask me no questions,' said the cat; 'but get me the brogues.'

"And wid that he leapt up the chimney and away wid him.

"Well, poor Larry and the wife and childer were in a terrible takin', and the next mornin' off he sets to the town; and on the way, he met the wee-est little man that iver was, in an ould grey coat and woollen cap.

"'How's every rope's length of you, Larry?' sez he; 'and how's the woman and the childer?'

"'Faith! purty well, considerin',' sez

Larry; 'but the heart widin me is sick and sore.'

"So the fairy man asked him what was the matter, and Larry tould him ivery word.

"'The cat's a divil—a fiend,' said the ould man; 'and more betoken, he manes to murder you and yours this very night; but I'll help yez if ye'll do one thing, and that is, stop up the window at the back of yer cabin.'

"'Faith, and I'll do that with a heart and a half,' sez Larry.

"And thin the ould fellow tould him to go home, and bring the cat in a bag along wid him. So off set Larry.

"'I have come for you and the gossoons,' sez he to his wife. 'You must all come to Mill-street to git the brogues fitted.'

"'And must I go, too?' asked the cat.

"'Faix, you must,' sez Larry. 'If nat'ral-born Christians couldn't be fitted without being on the spot, it's hard to expect that you could.'

"'And how am I to thravel?' asks he.

"'In a bag on me back,' sez Larry. 'I'll whip you through the country like a dinner to a hog, and man or mortal shall niver be the wiser.'

"So off they set, the two ov thim—the cat tied up safe and sound, and Larry whistling 'Thamama Tulla,' for not a word must he say, by the ould fellow's orders. Whin he got to the right place, down he sat; and presently up comes a big black man, on a black horse, wid a lot ov black dogs afther his tail. He gives Larry a flash wid his eye, and Larry opens the bag, and out jumps puss, and away wid him over the bog like lightning. Off they all wint in purshuit, and the grandest hunt they had that iver was. The cat was cotched at last, and torn in pieces; and often in the night, they say, ye can hear the screams and the yellin' and the howlin' ov him along the plains of Moimmore. And that's the story of 'Caith na brogueen,' Miss Flaherty."

"And a fine one it is," answered she. "Sure, I can hear the scramin' and shriekin' ov the baste through the music. And now play 'Shiela na Guira,' or the 'Green Woods of Trough.' They mind me ov the fine evenins in the airly spring, when we sat at the cabin door, afore grief or sorrow came to us; and the gay boys and girls tould their stories, and sang their songs under the ould ash tree. And thin, Misther Donnaghan, ye may jist step inside; for there's a fine bed

all ready for yez, and it's yourself that's kindly welcome to it."

"It's to the Coach and Horses, beyant, that I ought to be goin'," said Sil, awkwardly.

"Sorra a foot ye'll set in the Coach and Horses this blessed night. I haven't so many visitors that I can't make the one I have welcome; and haven't ye been cheerin' the heart in me wid yer pipes and yer stories? And sure Gretta Flaherty isn't the one to turn a dog out of doors, let alone on a pourin', peltin' night like this."

Thus exhorted, Sil played the "Green Woods of Trough," "Shiela na Guira," "The Red-haired Man's Wife," and "Peggy Slevin." And at last sleep began to press down his one eye, and even he had had enough of the pipes; so he set them down by the fireplace, bade Miss Flaherty good night, and retreated into the inner room. His hostess raked down the fire; and then, seating herself in the straw chair, she drew a well-worn shawl about her, her eyes blinked for some time at the expiring embers, and then she fell into a doze. In her dreams, the bagpipes still played on, and the fresh spring air blew as it had once done by the old ash tree.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XIX.

I FLEW rather than ran across the lawn, and arrived breathless before the house.

All the windows were closed, and the blinds drawn down.

There was no trace of wheels on the gravel path.

It was very strange, if the terrible event had taken place as far back as the day of my departure for Dumfernaghalee, that no breath of the tragedy had found its way into the public prints—that no suspicion of the sad truth had been felt beyond the gates of The Grove; when the lodge-keeper, too, was so evidently unfriendly.

Surely the Mart was not closed when I had passed it a few hours before.

Perhaps things were not really so bad, after all, I thought, while I panted for information, and yet dreaded to receive it.

I believe I should have gone back again to the terrace, bearing my almost insupport-

able load of suspense and anxiety unlightened, had not Janet suddenly appeared at an upper window, and perceived me.

As our eyes met, she made rapid signs; and in an incredibly short space of time, for one usually so deliberate in all her movements, she came down and let me in.

"Come ben, come ben," she exclaimed, speaking rapidly, but in a low, cautious tone of voice. "Hech, mon, but there's been sair wark here syne you gaed awa."

"Is it true?" I asked, trembling, and longing but afraid to hear her answer.

"True!" she repeated—"ay, it's owre true."

"Dear me!" I exclaimed, my worst fears confirmed, and utterly incapable of expressing the thoughts that rapidly passed through my brain. "Dear me! dear me!"

At last the question—

"How is Miss Emma?" forced itself to my lips.

"Hech, puir thing!" exclaimed the lady's-maid, "she's taen on unco sair; but it might hae been waur—it might hae been waur!"

Perhaps I did not quite understand her.

"Is he—have they buried him yet?"

"Hech, mon! are ye daft? He's no dead—though the doctors think he may nae get owre it."

"Thank Heaven!—then there is some hope of his recovery?"

"Ay—ay," replied Janet; "but unco'sma'. Puir mon! puir mon! wha'd ever hae thowt it o' him, puir silly creature!"

"Is he sensible?"

"Na, mon—never syne they fand him. He has nae opened lips nor een."

"Could I see Miss Emma?"

"Ay," replied the woman. "I'll e'en tell her you're ben; aiblins, she'll no refuse to see you the noo."

She did not; and, in less than five minutes after Janet's departure, I clasped my poor weeping darling in my arms.

For several minutes neither of us spoke; then she was the first to break the oppressive silence.

"O, Tom!" she gasped, as she hid her face on my breast.

"When was it?" I asked.

"The very day you left us."

"Dearest, why not have let me know? I might have been of some use—some consolation."

"Mamma thought it would be better not,

for fear of your returning before the election was over."

"Is there any hope?"

"The surgeon thinks there is—a little."

"Whom did you send for?"

"Fletcher."

"That was right, darling. He's the very man I would have advised you to call in."

"I remembered you and Robert saying he was the best surgeon in Dublin."

"Where did it occur?" I asked.

"In the plantation. Martin found it out first, and gave the alarm."

"Is it known?"

"I hope not—I believe not, except by our own people. The surgeon thinks it may have been accident."

"Thank Heaven!"

"I do not think it was," whispered my darling, with a shudder.

"Why, dearest? What makes you think so?"

"I don't know, Tom. What is your opinion?"

I hesitated. She repeated the question.

"It is the same as yours, dear," I replied.

Again Emma shuddered, and hid her face on my breast.

"How does your mother bear up?" I asked.

"Wonderfully. She has scarcely left him for a moment since he was brought home."

"Is he conscious?"

"I think so. But he makes no sign, and has never opened his eyes."

"Does he take any nourishment?"

"Yes, everything that is given to him."

"Why do you suppose he is conscious?"

"Mr. Fletcher says his pulse varies according to what is said before him; also when mamma comes into or leaves the room."

"Dearest, have you any idea of the probable cause?"

"I think it has something to do with money matters or business. Indeed, mamma said as much when I proposed writing to you and Robert. Oh," she exclaimed, with energy, "how I wish we had never come here! We were a thousand times happier at Clontarf."

To the best of my ability, I tried to console my darling, and not altogether without success; for, after a passionate burst of weeping on my shoulder, she grew calmer, and said—

"Would you like to see mamma?"

"Of all things, dearest, if she will see me."

"I am sure she will."

Emma then left me to speak to her mother, and presently returned with the answer that Mrs. M'Lachlan could not leave her husband, but would expect me in his room. I was one of the family.

I went upstairs, Emma with me. On the way, I asked her if her brother knew of the terrible event.

"No," she replied. "Mamma thought it would be better not to tell him—at least, not yet; for he is so impetuous, he would have been certain to rush off at once, without waiting for leave; and his commission, she said, was of the greatest consequence to him now, as we should have to live in a very different manner from what we have lately been accustomed to; and she said much the same thing when I proposed telling you."

I was prepared for a great deal, but scarcely for the spectacle that met my view on entering the sick man's room—for he was, indeed, terribly disfigured.

For the first time since his accident, Mr. M'Lachlan opened his eyes for a moment as I stood at the foot of his bed, closed them again directly, heaved a deep sigh, and shuddered from head to foot.

For weeks his life hung upon a thread.

"Nothing but his naturally powerful constitution could have saved him," surgeon Fletcher remarked to me one day.

"Do you think it was an accident?" I made bold to inquire.

"It might have been," was that gentleman's cautious reply; "but, mind you, I do not say it was."

"It is a terrible affair."

"Yes. By the way, am I right in supposing you are engaged to that charming young lady, his daughter?"

I felt myself grow crimson. It was a subject I could not endure to hear named by strangers; and coming from one who, however pre-eminently shining his professional character might be, was by no means a model of domestic virtue, I was stung to the quick, and replied by a very slight inclination of the head.

"They must be very wealthy," he continued, quite unabashed, glancing round the drawing-room, in which our interview took place.

I made no reply.

"Is it not so?" the surgeon had the further audacity to ask.

"I presume you have received your fee, Mr. Fletcher, each time you have seen your patient?"

The great man coloured. I was rejoiced to see that I had effectually chastised his impertinent curiosity. He haughtily wished me "Good morning," and stalked out of the room.

I was rude enough to allow him to find his way out by himself.

By slow, very slow degrees, Mr. M'Lachlan recovered; but a very long time elapsed before he could speak.

As my mother-in-law had surmised, her husband's affairs were cruelly embarrassed. In addition to the heavy losses already alluded to as sustained through the dishonesty of a partner, he had speculated largely in foreign bonds, and had lost enormous sums.

His creditors seized upon all that he had; and, owing to some flaw in the marriage settlements, his wife's property was also lost to her. They were, literally, cast penniless upon the world.

How happy I felt that I had an asylum to offer them.

But it was not required, for the principal creditors formed themselves into a joint-stock company, with limited liability, and appointed Mr. M'Lachlan manager of the mart, with a commencing salary of £300 a year.

It was a great change for them back again to the cottage at Clontarf from The Grove; but, happily, Emma's father was also a changed man.

He never alluded to the "accident," as the mysterious affair in the plantation had come to be generally called; nevertheless, his daughter's views and mine regarding it remained the same.

Yes, he was a changed man, and a happier one than he had ever been.

But I am anticipating.

CHAPTER XX.

MY aunt Johanna (Mrs. Thorowgood), my uncle, and all my cousins congratulated me; as did also my numerous acquaintances—Anglicè, friends.

"By Jove, you are a lucky dog!" exclaimed Dick, slapping me on the back with an earnestness that brought the tears into my eyes, and made me wish he had been less heavy-handed.

"What's the salary, Burra?" demanded Harry. "A couple of hundred, I suppose?"

"Something about that," I replied, evasively—for I did not choose to enter into the question of ways and means with him.

"By jingo, you're a regular Croesus!" remarked another fellow, who often affected vulgar colonialisms in order to annoy me. "What are you going to stand, on the strength of it?"

But I was in no humour for jesting, and beat a retreat as swiftly as possible.

The Professor congratulated me warmly; and, coming from one I knew so well and valued so highly, his were indeed most precious words, which revived my drooping courage, and sent me home to the terrace with a lighter heart than I had carried in my bosom for some time.

I had been considerably allowed a month to prepare for my entombment, and had selfishly hoped not to have entered my living sepulchre alone; but, in consequence of the events narrated in the preceding pages, I was reluctantly compelled, at the expiration of my leave, to return in solitary state to the scene of my future labours, and take up my quarters in the great house allotted to "the doctor," which stood, at some distance from any other habitation, on a small hill opposite the rectory, overlooking the village and the bay.

I made provisional arrangements with my predecessor's servants—his groom, that is, and his cook, or shall I say maid of all-work?—which, indeed, was the woman's proper designation.

Frank I found to be a very smart fellow—much more so than I had expected to find living in Ultima Thule. I did not then know how smart he was; but his stay in my service was not of very long duration.

Margery M'Anvil, however, was a treasure. She was a good cook, a first-rate getter-up of shirts and collars, a notable cleaner, scrubber, and scourer; and was, moreover, gifted with an inordinate love for pigs—one of which unclean animals she insisted upon my purchasing at the quarterly fair in the adjoining town—"to ate," as she expressed it, "the lavin's about the place."

It was surely strange that she and Emma could not get on at all.

One reason of their disagreement may have been that Margery was a rigid Catholic; a fact, however, which did not prevent

her subsequently entering the service of a curate in the neighbourhood, in whose household she played a conspicuous part in certain mysterious events, which shall be narrated in due course.

Ah me! it was a lonely life I led during all that time; though the agent was most kind, the rector friendly, and the farmers as cordial and civil as it was in their natures to be.

I had purchased my predecessor's horse and jaunting-car; but the latter I seldom used, as I preferred riding to driving, for I had been accustomed to the saddle from a very early age, and in Dumfernaghalee was never at a loss for a small boy or girl to hold my animal while I paid my visits in the cottages.

I had but a sorry time of it, take it all in all, during those first few weary months. It was here, there, and everywhere with me, day and night; and such levées as I held on each day of opening either of my two dispensaries.

I feel certain every one in both parishes obtained a ticket in order to have a good look at the "new doctor," as they called me for a very long time, and from whom they seemed, I know not why, to expect great things. For instance, one man, who had limped through life from infancy to old age on an unreduced dislocation of the hip joint, came over, confidently expecting that I would be able to "stretch out his leg" for him.

An old woman, too, the bridge of whose nose had been totally destroyed by a lupus, years before, was good enough to say she thought I was skilful enough to build her a new one.

My predecessors must have had a very loose method of managing their patients, for I found the people most intractable when I first took them in hand.

All the old women in the two parishes, for instance, were in the habit of assembling in the dispensaries when opened every Monday and Friday, for three hours each day, when they gossiped and discussed the scandal of the neighbourhood to such an extent that I was compelled, in self-defence, to adopt strict measures, and put a stop to their little reunions by admitting the patients one by one, and suffering none to loiter on the premises when once they had been served.

For the information of those who are ignorant upon such matters, I may state that

each union is divided into a certain number of districts, each of which has its dispensary, with a medical officer attached; except where, as in my case, owing to the paucity of the inhabitants, one doctor is made to do duty for two districts; when the labour, but not the salary, is doubled.

A certain number of ratepayers are selected by the magistrates, who are ex-officio guardians, to issue relief tickets to the poor. These tickets—or "lines," as they are called—are of two sorts: one black, for advice and medicine only; the other red, requiring the attendance of the medical officer at the sick person's house within a reasonable time.

These red lines are the bugbear of the doctor's life; for they are too frequently granted without due inquiry being made into the case, and the unlucky medical man is not seldom called up out of bed, and forced to travel, often a distance of many miles, in all weathers, to visit a person perfectly well able to come in to him.

I must say, however, that I had small cause of complaint against any of my committee at Dumfernaghalee, where all applicants for "lines" were rigidly cross-questioned by the guardians, who took much pains to avoid giving me unnecessary trouble, for which consideration I trust I was proportionately grateful.

Ludicrous mistakes, nevertheless, occasionally were made. For instance, I was on the point of setting out for Pennyletter one Sunday morning, when a red line was brought to me, crossed "urgent."

The locality I had to visit was on the very confines of my district, quite ten miles from Dumfernaghalee; and only on my arrival at the place named on the ticket did I discover that the patient had been her own messenger; for, upon my inquiring for Judy Byrne, I was informed that she hadn't come in yet, as she had some business to transact in the town; but that, if I liked to wait, she'd "aiblins" be back in an hour.

I leave the reader to guess whether or not I complied with this modest request.

On another occasion I was called out of bed, and hurried off in the midst of a violent storm, to see a case said to be of a very serious nature; and upon reaching the cabin where the patient lived, after wading across a stream and about two acres of bog, was shown a little girl with a "stye" on her eye!

"What made you send for me at such a

time of night, for a trifle like this?" I asked, with very justifiable indignation.

"'Cause," was the reply, "we only noticed it just now, and were afeard to let it run till mornin'."

Such cases, however, were the exception; and, indeed, many put off coming to me longer than they ought to have done, for fear of giving me trouble.

On the whole, however, it was cheerless work.

They were a very strange race, the Dumfrenaghaleeans and Moighrathians, more Saxon than Celtic, and more Scotch than Irish; but they had a spice of originality about them, too, that distinguished them from every other people with whom I have been brought in contact, in the old world or the new.

Still they are a warm-hearted and hospitable people, with all their faults; and, on the whole, were anxious to accommodate me in every way they could, and render as little galling as possible the yoke under which I groaned among them.

I was registrar of births, deaths, and marriages, as well as medical officer, and often received very puzzling replies to queries I tried to put as plainly as possible.

"Are you married?" I asked a man one day.

"No, sir."

"Oh, single?"

"No, sir."

"A widower, then."

"No, sir."

"What on earth are you, man, if you're neither married, nor single, nor a widower?"

"My wife's dead, sir."

"What do you want?" I asked of another man who knocked at my door rather early one morning. "Have you brought me a line?"

"No, sir, I haven't."

"Do you want to register a birth or a death?"

"I do not, then."

"What do you want, my good fellow?"

"To put down a child's name, shure," was the reply.

"How do you spell your name?" I asked of another.

"It's meself doesn't know. Shure you ought to know without asking me."

"What are you?" I once asked a stupid-looking blockhead; who replied—

"I'm a Catholic, sir."

And I found that the only way to ascertain a person's occupation down there was to ask him what he "followed."

If the morals of the inhabitants were not all that could have been wished, they were not, certainly, worse than those of the dwellers in other villages of similar size and the like isolated position; and I think I may say, we might have furnished a bright example in that respect to more pretentious places. But we are all so prone to believe in country innocence and pastoral purity, that we are apt to forget that, when men and women congregate together in large numbers or in small, there will be recreant hearts and perverted intellects revelling in all that is forbidding and impure, and that by these exceptions we are not to judge the mass.

They were honest, however, those country folks; at least, I never lost anything all the time I lived among them, except one duck, which may have been eaten by the rats, and my garden and poultry yard were quite defenceless.

One of my first private patients was the old rector of the parish, to whom I have alluded. He was an Englishman, of excellent family, but had lived in the place so long that he had grown as outlandish and barbarous in his ways as any of the natives.

The first time I attended Divine service in his church—my "people" had no place of worship in either of the parishes, and it was only on rare occasions I could contrive to get to Pennyletter, where they had a chapel—it cost me a greater effort than I would care to exert every day to preserve a serious countenance, for the old gentleman had a curious habit of giving a little verbal hop at the close of every sentence, very difficult to describe, but horribly ludicrous to listen to, until one got accustomed to it; in fact, the first time Bob heard it he positively laughed aloud, to my infinite horror; but fortunately was not generally remarked, as I coughed demonstratively, and drowned the unseemly merriment.

He was fearfully musical, too, and treated his congregation to an anthem now and then; on which occasions, the tears were more than once brought into my eyes, more especially when the reverend gentleman joined in lustily with what ought to have been the schoolmaster's solo.

The emoluments of Mr. Smith's rectory

amounted to some £700 a year, in addition to which the late Sir Stewart Middleton had paid a curate to assist him.

Now, it so happened that, some little time after my settlement in Dumfernaghalee, the clerical assistant sent in his resignation; but consented, at the rector's urgent request, to remain until some one could be found to take his place.

The thought occurred to me that the vacant post would suit Charles Woodward, who was discontented with the appointment he then held, and had written to me to ask if there was any chance of his getting something to do in my neighbourhood.

I spoke to Mr. Smith, who replied that he did not care whom he had, so long as he was not bothered; but if a gentleman, so much the better.

Mr. Dobbie was kind enough to say that to be a friend of mine was a recommendation in his eyes; and so, to cut the matter short, Charles, Mrs. Woodward, and all their belongings were transferred to and safely located in Dumfernaghalee by the end of June, just after my return from transacting some important business on my own account in Dublin.

AFTER HURLINGHAM.

I'D souped, I'd fished, had my cut off the leg;
 I'd taken my pint of Beaune;
 When from out of a pasty anointed with egg
 There bubbled a sound like a moan.
 There were eight birds' claws all together thrust
 To signal of hard, dry steak,
 In a weird, wild way, from that hardened crust,
 And then with a warning shake—
 "Oh, eat us not," said the pigeons within;
 "Oh, let us in gravy lie;
 We've lost every feather, oh, leave us our skin—
 At Hurlingham did we die."
 "A blood-royal prince did my royal blood shed."
 "A foreign duke killed me."
 "I was shot by a marquis in back and in head."
 "I was winged by a bold M. P."
 "Oh, eat us not, or we'll lie like lead,"
 They chorused in soft quartette;
 "You shall suffer from pains," they together said,
 "Till your forehead with fear grows wet.
 You murder us daily in many a match,
 We'll take our revenge of you.
 Why didn't you leave us our eggs to hatch?
 Not your hands in our blood imbue."
 "Here, waiter, garçon, scoundrel! quick,
 And take me away that pie;
 My soul with the Hurlingham memory's sick—
 The trap, the pigeons—they fly;
 The shot, the fall, the hurrying hound;
 The scrunch of his strong trap jaws.
 How darest thou bring me such pigeons browned?
 Quick, rascal, tell me the cause."

Charles stared at the pie, and he stared at me,
 Half scared at my angry looks—
 "It really can't be so, sir, you see,
 For, so help me Bob, they're rooks!"

TABLE TALK.

PROBABLY everybody who has travelled in Germany has noticed the wonderful aversion of Germans, at all times of the year, to fresh air; and yet they are, in the main, a strong and healthy race—as, indeed, were the Englishmen of a hundred years ago, who were, no doubt, just as bad. Travelling from Frankfort to Munich, I was almost poisoned by the smoke of six Germans, the while both windows were, of course, shut. At Gastein, again, the windows were fixtures: they could not possibly be opened. At Vienna, in the month of August, not only was every window hermetically sealed, in spite of the positively stifling heat, but the double windows of mid-winter remained up almost everywhere. At Prague, in the salon of the hotel where I stayed, each of the seven windows was not only shut but locked, in order that that noxious element, fresh air, might not, by any possibility, be admitted.

SPEAKING OF THE beautiful tints observed in water, Professor Tyndall says "the green colour is, I think, correctly accounted for in 'Hours of Exercise in the Alps.' In crossing the Atlantic I had frequent opportunities of testing the explanation there given. Looked straight down upon, there are portions of the ocean to which we should hardly ascribe a trace of blue—at the most, a hint of indigo reaches the eye. The water, indeed, is practically black, and this is an indication both of its depth and its freedom from mechanically suspended matter. In small thicknesses water is sensibly transparent to all kinds of light; but as the thickness increases, the rays of low refrangibility are first absorbed, and after them the other rays. Where, therefore, the water is very deep and very pure, all the colours are absorbed, and such water ought to appear black, as no light is sent from its interior to the eye. The approximation of the Atlantic Ocean to this condition is an indication of its extreme purity. Throw a white pebble into such water; as it sinks it becomes greener and greener, and, before it disappears, it reaches a vivid blue green. Break such a pebble into fragments, each of these will behave like the

unbroken mass; grind the pebble to powder, every particle will yield its modicum of green; and if the particles be so fine as to remain suspended in the water, the scattered light will be a uniform green. Hence the greenness of shoal water. You go to bed with the black Atlantic around you. You rise in the morning and find it a vivid green; and you correctly infer that you are crossing the bank of Newfoundland. Such water is found charged with fine matter in a state of mechanical suspension. The light from the bottom may sometimes come into play, but it is not necessary. A storm can render the water muddy by rendering the particles too numerous and gross."

IS THERE a strike looming in the future amongst the boys of the Shoeblack Brigade? It looks probable, for of late the indulgence in a quiet shine has been somewhat marred by their independent attitude. We say "indulgence in a quiet shine," for it really is a pleasurable sensation to stand in the shade, and have the cool blacking applied (note—be sure the boy has a bottle), and afterwards have your hot pavement-tired feet gently brushed, the leather growing softer, and accommodating itself to your "callosities," as our bootmaker will persist in calling a pair of prominences that are very volcanoes of shooting pains at times. But the indulgence is marred by the utter contempt in which the wielders of the blacking brush hold a penny. In fact, there are a few scarlet aristocrats of the profession, who kneel in choice spots, and seem disposed to refuse anything smaller—larger—smaller (which is it?) than silver.

SITTING ONE DAY outside our barrack, discussing the Crimea—"Psha!" said a young officer who had joined since the declaration of peace, and was, consequently, not "décoré," "I don't think much of this Crimea. Every fool got a medal there." "No," said old B., who had just come up, scowling at him (B. had been mentioned three or four times in despatches), "not every fool."

FOUR YOUNG cavalry officers, travelling by rail from Boulogne to Paris, were joined at Amiens by a quiet, elderly gentleman, who shortly requested that a little of one window might be opened—a not unreasonable demand, as both were shut, and all four

gentlemen were smoking. But it was refused, and again refused on being preferred a second time, very civilly; whereupon the elderly gentleman put his umbrella through the glass. "Shall we stand the impertinence of this bourgeois?" said the officers to one another. "Never." And they thrust four cards into his hand, which he received methodically, and looked carefully at all four; producing his own, one of which he tendered to each officer with a bow. Imagine their feelings when they read on each—"Marshal Randon, Ministre de Guerre."

I REMEMBER an anecdote of the accomplished, the witty, the satirical Porson, which may be new to your readers. Once, a scholiast, with whom he was having an argument about Greek verse, finished by saying, "But, Mr. Porson, in point of fact, we know very little about Greek iambs." "If, sir," said Porson, "you will be so good as to express that opinion in the singular number, I shall have much pleasure in agreeing with you."

APROPOS OF THE Ashantee War, the *Sheffield Independent* says:—"Thanks to the 'sharp practice' of our Birmingham neighbours, there is no reason to fear that the English soldiers will suffer much in the war on the Gold Coast. The unfortunate Ashantees are armed with a well-known musket, of which a large quantity are manufactured in Birmingham for 'the African trade.' These muskets are flint-locks, and are supplied for exportation at about seven shillings each. By this time the Ashantees will doubtless have discovered that their weapons have 'peculiarities.'"

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W. C.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 293.

August 9, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XIV.

"MORT!"



OUIS RIVIERE stood looking from one to the other of his auditors for a few moments, nursing one arm in his hand; and then, letting it fall, he pointed to it, saying—

"Ah, bah! but it was not much—the pain was not so very great—a bone broken, that is all.

"It did not arrest me for long.

I was up again and running directly, by the side of Pierre—running hard once more to get out of the hateful glare of light which showed all our movements to the enemy, who now revenged themselves for their ill-success by firing after us again and again.

"The firing was but in vain: they might have spared their powder and shot, for in a few minutes the friendly darkness had opened to us its arms. The glare of light was far behind, and we were running gently down a lane which led us out towards fields and between vineyards. Looking back, as we stood to listen for pursuit, there was but the reflection against the sky sent up by the cursed cage where we had lain for so long gnawing our hearts; and now it seemed all to be like a dream—it could not be true!

"But I fatigue you with my long recital," said Rivière, looking at Lady Lawler.

"No, no; pray go on!" she exclaimed, eagerly.

Rivière bowed, and went on with his narrative.

"We were past running now, and kept on at a rapid walk, which took us over the ground pretty well; and I was beginning to consider which direction we should take. I was panting still with my late exertions; but I did not mind, for every breath was that of the free, pure air which blew full in my face, and seemed to cool the throbbing temples. I felt tired, but the spirit was in me to run on for ever—anywhere sooner than be captured.

"'Let us get on faster,' I cried at last, excitedly, for Pierre had tramped on at my side without speaking for some little time—'let us get on faster, for morning will soon be here.'

"As I spoke, I ran on for a few yards to set him an example, and urge him to fresh exertion; for during the last ten minutes it had seemed that he had grown sluggish in his movements.

"Ah, how I misjudged the poor lad! Suddenly stopping short, he uttered a strange, wild cry.

"I was at his side in an instant.

"'What is it?' I cried, trembling in every limb; for I seemed to know what was wrong.

"'Quick, help me!' he exclaimed. 'I was hit when they fired first. Lay me under that hedge.'

"A hand seemed to compress my heart as I softly bore him to the turf by the roadside, and there kneeled down with his heavy head resting upon my arm.

"I don't know how long it was that I knelt there, stunned and helpless. I would have gone for aid, but he always stayed me with a whisper.

"'It is getting dark,' he said softly, 'and I feel now as a little child. I fear the darkness—do not leave me!'

"Mon Dieu! How my poor heart seemed

to swell, as with one great sob that would not escape—another prisoner—but I—I would have set it free.

"I cannot tell how long I was, I say, stunned. I was bleeding, I knew; but what of that? I knew now how I loved my companion, the friend who had been with me in all my trouble. And he was dying!

"Yes, dying; for in a few minutes he turned more towards me, his head resting more upon my breast, as when one settles down for a sweet sleep.

"I knew it was at hand then; for he whispered—very faintly—

"Go now—lay my head softly down; escape for your life. Ah, mon Dieu!"

"I laid his poor head down as he had told me, and then knelt in the darkness, looking down upon his poor inanimate face; for he had passed away, and the heavy tears were raining down upon the eyes that would never look upon me again. The dogs had murdered him—my poor friend was no more."

CHAPTER XV.

HOME.

"I WAS too much stunned at first to believe it. I could not think that our fortune could have forsaken us in this way; and for a while I knelt there speaking to him, calling him louder by name, and in a childish state of wonderment asking myself why he did not speak. Then I wondered whether I, too, were badly hit; and I half wished that I might lie down by his side and sleep.

"You must not think ill of me and my ways, miladi; for think how I was broken in spirit with my long imprisonment, and even worn out with my efforts to escape. And besides—look at this; after our long chase and struggle for life, now that escape seemed almost certain, here was my poor friend stricken down.

"It is perhaps singular, but hating him at first, I had grown to love Pierre as a brother; and now, mon Dieu! he was dead.

"I laid his head softly down, with the first tears I had shed for many days raining down upon his poor face. What will you? It was childish! I could not bring him back to life? True, but I am a Frenchman, and I come of a great nation. We are not like you English. We are easily turned to love, to hate, to revenge. We feel and think strongly. It is our climate—our sun.

You—you English, are in a land of spleen and fogs, and cannot feel as we do.

"But stay! Oh, mon ami—look, miladi is moved by my story. She pities poor Pierre. She faints."

Sir Richard was at her side, with Rivière, in an instant, frowning at the little Frenchman's anxiously proffered aid, which he mentally called officious. Lady Lawler, however, recovered herself after a brief struggle.

"No, no," she exclaimed, "it is nothing. I—I am rather weak. Give me a glass of wine, Dick."

"Dick" frowned a little more deeply at being addressed in this familiar way before a stranger, and, before obeying, somewhat roughly raised his lady higher in her chair, from which she seemed to be gliding a moment or two before.

"That will do," she said, peevishly; and Sir Richard looked very grave as he poured out the required glass of wine, which was drunk with an accompanying sigh of satisfaction.

"You can sit down—I am better now," said Lady Lawler, imperiously.

"Hadn't you better go up to bed?" said Sir Richard. "Monsieur Rivière will finish his history another night—or morning," he added, with a glance at the clock.

"Oh, oui, yes—when miladi wishes," said Rivière, eagerly.

"I am better now," said Lady Lawler, quietly.

"Yes, Addy; but it is very—"

"Yes, yes—I know," she said, pettishly. "And you are keeping Monsieur Rivière waiting. Go on, Monsieur Rivière, please, I want to hear the rest."

"But it is too much—my recital is so full of horrors. I shock you," protested Rivière, with outstretched hands.

"Go on, Monsieur Rivière, if you please," said Lady Lawler, firmly.

Sir Richard drew in a long breath, wrinkled his forehead and tightened his lips, as he rose once more, walked across to a cabinet, took out a cigar, whose end he bit off viciously, and then began to smoke, sending the vapour forth in short, angry puffs, as his visitor continued—

"Yes, I kneeled there a long time, and then, in a half-dreamy way, I rose, and laid my handkerchief over poor Pierre's face. There was not a breath of air to lift a corner as I tottered and stumbled away along the road,

until broad daylight—moving now as if I were some machine working without thought, and merely going forward in the one same direction. At last, though, thought seemed to come back, and the stunned feeling to depart; for I was each moment growing more faint. There was a wood before me, and into that I crawled, pushing back the brambles and bushes I displaced in entering; and then, on and on I went, forcing my way, where every twig seemed an enemy trying to trip me up, till at last one stronger than the rest caught my foot, and I gave a groan and fell, too helpless to rise again.

"I suppose I must have fallen into a stupor-like sleep, which lasted many weary hours. Nature, overwrought as she was, needed rest; and darkness had set in before I once more unclosed my eyes.

"It was now to awake to a sense of agonizing hunger, which I could not appease, for it took me long to get out of the wood. I came at last, though, to an opening where a farmer had planted the ground with roots, and of these I ate to stay the famishing pain.

"But there, it is so late, I will not weary you with my long, long journey to Paris; let me only tell you that I was obliged to walk by night, and it was many, many journeys before I stood at last before my own house, not daring at first to enter.

"You will say why did I not dare? I will tell you. I was thirsting for revenge. I believed all evil of Marie, and that fiend, Lemaire; and yet, now the time was come, I feared to go and assuage that thirst; for, strong as was my hate, *mon Dieu*, how I loved poor Marie! Then, too, I dreaded to throw away my liberty. Was it known here that I had escaped? Surely. The news would be sent, and the police would be on the look-out for me. '*Ma foi!*' they would say, 'the bird is sure to come back to its nest, and we will await him there.'

"Can you think what it was to me to go and lurk by day in vile courts and alleys, and then steal by night to stand opposite my own window, and watch the light upon the curtain, not daring to enter, afraid to let Marie know that I was there? I had written to her, but she made no sign. I had said, 'Hang a black glove in the window if there is danger, and a white one if I may come.' But she made no sign; and I gnawed my lips in my impotent rage.

"She, too, is really against me," I said.

'I was holding one hope to my heart, but it has gone for ever, and now—'

"My hands clenched with the rage within me, till the long nails entered my flesh; and I went back to the house one night, and watched to see Lemaire enter; but he did not come.

"I watched another night, and he did not come. Again another night, and he did not come; and then I tore my hair.

"'Fool!' I shrieked to myself, 'he is there—he lives there; and the shadow you have seen pass the window is his.'

"I glided by the *concièrge*, and went softly up the stairs, past the familiar entries of dear neighbours; but I felt then that they were all my enemies, and, with the wrath of a demon in me, I reached our own floor, thrust open the door, and entered.

"There were two seated on a couch; and as I darted at them, open-handed, the woman shrieked and the man started away.

"I stood transfixed. The mad rage seemed to ooze from me, and I could have embraced them both. They were strangers. I had been away for long, and Marie had left the house.

"They thought me mad; so I made what excuses I could, and turned away. I ran down the stairs, and asked in a feigned voice for Madame Rivière's address. It was a few streets off, where there were humble lodgings; and there I ran.

"Should I watch again? 'No,' I said, 'I will end the torture. Perchance I am wrong—she may not have had my letters. Stay!'

"I ran back to the *concièrge* of the old house.

"'Any letters for Madame Rivière?'

"They gave me my own, and my heart bounded within me, as I hurried back. Through some carelessness the letters had neither been forwarded nor returned. I forgot that the *concièrge* might have recognized me, and that I might be retaken.

"Ah! I sigh even now with contentment, and still I tear my heart to think I could be such a villain as to doubt; for upon reaching my home—yes, my home—it was to fall on my knees before poor Marie, whom I had wronged indeed.

"But I had not wronged that villain, Lemaire, who had persecuted the poor child till she had had to meditate flight. He had been there, with subterfuge and trick; and lastly, finding that cajoling had

no effect, he had stooped to threats; and matters had gone so far that in another day my poor child would have left Paris, and I should have lost her, for she would not have dared to leave her address.

"How could I doubt her—my sweet—my love! As she lay her head on my arm, and looked up at me with her soft, gentle eyes, she little knew how she was punishing me for my cruel thoughts. But still, see what I had suffered! Ma foi, I could not help it.

"I was sitting feasting upon her soft, pale face, when suddenly I saw it grow drawn, and white, and stony. It was as though death had stricken her; for her eyes grew wide and dilated, and her lips, blue and ghastly, stood apart.

"A great horror had come upon her, and I saw that she was gazing over my shoulder at something which seemed to fascinate her, so that she could neither move nor speak.

"I started round: it was to see Lemaire in the act of closing the door.

"With a cry of rage I bounded across the room, and throwing myself against the door, I hurled it open, and leaped down the stairs, half a dozen at the time. But I was too late. He was as fleet as I, and he had the start. When I reached the street, he was gone, and I knew not which way to run in the dark.

"As I stood hesitating, a soft hand caught mine. Marie was at my side, whispering counsel. Her woman's wit had told her what to do—what must follow.

"'We must flee, my Louis,' she whispered, hoarsely. 'There is not a moment to spare. He will denounce you to the police.'

"She was right; and for a while I stood paralyzed. For a chill of dread ran through my veins, as like a vision there rose before my giddy brain the cruel sufferings of the past. I should be cast once more into prison, and Marie would be exposed to the machinations of that monster.

"Bah! what is a man in time of trouble? Miladi, it is to your charming sex we owe so much. But for Marie, I should have been taken. She had darted upstairs, and returned in a minute equipped for our journey. She handed me a hat, a wrapper—garb that she had, like a true wife, kept ready for my return, her heart telling her that it would be some day in the future.

"The next moment we were in the street, she leading me past the wretched flickering lamps. Where did we mean to flee? Any-

where in the wide world, so that we were together.

"I was so stunned, so broken with all that I had passed through, so chilled with dread, that I had to trust to Marie; and she led me like a little child, guiding me across the rough way, and under the opposite houses.

"Fate seemed very cruel to us then; for before we had gone many steps Marie's quick ear detected danger, and she drew me back into a dark entry opposite her home, where we stood, hand clasped in hand, listening to coming footsteps.

"Yes, there was no doubt about it—we had unwittingly taken the way by which Lemaire would return; and he, villain that he was, had lost no time. So that as we stood there, we heard him approach with two sergents de ville, whom he was rating for their tardiness.

"'But I tell you,' he said, hoarsely, 'he will be gone.'

"'Bah! monsieur would have us fly. We shall trap our bird, never fear.'

"'How can he get away?' said the other. 'He is safe. Paris is too small a place for him to hide in without our finding his perch.'

"Lemaire said something impatiently that I could not catch, though they were opposite to us. Then they halted; and Lemaire stayed at the entrance, while the two sergents de ville went in.

"Marie pressed her other hand over my lips, and laid her head upon my shoulder, spreading herself before me, as if to shield me from evil. And it was well that she restrained me; though reason told me that to stir would be madness, and must end in my capture.

"But it was a hard struggle, to stand there with my enemy—my cowardly persecutor—the man thirsting to do me the greatest wrong that man can do to man—with the fiend standing there, as it were, inviting me to dash across the road and strangle him where he stood.

"Marie must have divined my thoughts; for I felt her throw one arm round me, and hold me tighter and tighter to her breast. Then she softly took her hand from my mouth, to wreath it also round me, holding me more firmly, as her soft lips sought mine, and rested upon them in a long, clinging kiss.

"It was sealing my lips, indeed, so that I should utter no sound that should betray us

to Lemaire, who stood impatiently waiting for the return of the sergeants de ville.

"But a few minutes, at the outside, could have elapsed, but the space of time seemed an age. Now Lemaire took a step or two into the building, as if to speak to the porter; then he came out, fretting apparently with impatience. Then he seemed to be standing listening intently; and for a moment my heart stood still, and I sought to free myself from Marie, who only clung to me with a spasmodic energy. For, suddenly, Lemaire, whom we could just make out by the glimmer of the nearest lamp, stepped out into the roadway, making apparently for the entry where we stood concealed. In fact, it seemed as if he saw us; for he was walking straight before him. I felt Marie tremble, and now her hold began to slacken as if to set me free for the coming struggle; her lips, too, quitted mine, and sought my ear to whisper—

"Strike him down, and flee—England."

"I drew a long breath. I was to hold him then, at last! How should I be able to quit the hold I had upon him when once we came in contact? Should I have revenge or liberty? These were the thoughts which crossed my brain, as I nerved myself, and he crossed the road.

"Heavens, what an escape! When it seemed certain that he saw us plainly, he suddenly faced round, and stood with his back to us, evidently gazing up at the light burning in the room we had so lately left.

"He might have heard our hearts beat, with a heavy, low thud, thud, as he stood there; but he was too intent upon his task, and after muttering impatiently for a moment or two, he strode back. And this time we heard him speak to the concierge.

"Non, non, monsieur. No one has gone out since monsieur passed out last."

"The woman must have been asleep to make such an assertion; but Lemaire was evidently satisfied, and he waited again, impatiently, till we could hear the heavy descending steps of the police. And again Marie shuddered, and clung more closely to me.

"The room is empty, monsieur—the birds are flown."

"Did you search?"

"Search? Yes. A cat could not hide in the room without being seen."

"He must be in the house," said Lemaire.

"He has not passed out. Ask madame, there."

"Oh, non, non—nobody has passed out, messieurs may take my word for it," said the woman, speaking fast. "I should hear a cat come down the stairs; and I always listen—listen—listen all day long, almost all night; for it is my habitude, and I like to know when my people are in and out."

"You live alone?" said one of the sergeants de ville.

"My faith! yes—quite alone; and as I said to my friend—"

"And have no one to talk to," said the sergeant who was speaking.

"No—I have no one to talk to," exclaimed the woman, trying hard to keep up her discourse; but the sergeant would keep tripping her up, and now literally talked her back into her lodge, amongst her many keys, and shut her in.

"Dame!" he said, "why did women have tongues given to them?"

"You must search the whole house," said Lemaire, impatiently.

"Ah, bah! monsieur—you require too much," said the other sergeant.

"Too much!" cried Lemaire. "Here is a plotter against the King's life! He escapes from prison, and comes to his house. I denounce him, and show him to you—show you his hole, and you refuse to find him!"

"Monsieur seems to like denouncing Louis Rivière. He got the poor devil a long sentence. Is he not satisfied?"

"Mind I do not denounce you!" said Lemaire, sternly; and this silenced the sergeant de ville. "I order you to search that house, and to find the escaped prisoner. Refuse to do it, and I lay the case before your superiors."

"Ah, monsieur is angry. We do not refuse—oh, no, not at all. Come, Jules."

"The men entered the place again, and Lemaire remained outside, watching intently; listening too, as the sounds of altercation came down to the street, telling that the inhabitants of the different stages objected to this intrusion upon their privacy.

"The search took a long time, and never once did an opportunity offer for us to try and get away in the darkness. Lemaire was too close, and would certainly have seen us. So we waited on, till the sergeants once more came down; and after an angry altercation with Lemaire, wherein they refused

to stay and watch, and set him at defiance, departed for their bureau.

"I'll stay and watch, if it is for a month," I heard Lemaire mutter, as soon as he was alone. Then he stood listening, till the steps of the sergeants passed away in the distance; and after gazing up at the lights of the house, he turned round once more, and seemed to catch sight of something in the dark entry where we stood, for he suddenly uttered a loud 'Ha!' and came hurriedly across to where I stood, before Marie now, waiting, and with every nerve and muscle in full tension for my spring.

"At last!" I said, through my teeth; and on he came to his fate."

A PIECE OF SPONGE.

WE most of us have a very strong recollection of that piece of sponge with which we were washed in early days. For our part, we thoroughly well call to mind three pieces that matutinally made acquaintance with our little body: there was the big piece full of large holes, into which we surreptitiously inserted our fingers; there was the round piece, which held so much water for sluicing purposes, that when our little head was lathered, the hot soapy water squeezed over it came in a torrent that made us gasp again; and, lastly, there was the small piece of fine quality, which our nurse declared was soft as silk. Yes, but she had never been washed with it, and urged to complain by the sharp grains of sand which lurked within its depths. We murmured strongly against that piece of sponge, until in a pet it was set aside by our Mary Ann, when, to our deep regret, we found that we had only changed King Log for King Stork, inasmuch as the sponge was succeeded by a horrible square of flannel, which chafed us until we felt quite raw.

You have a pretty good idea, no doubt, of what a sponge is. You know that it is the skeleton-like support of a kind of zoophyte, whose home is at the bottom of the sea; and you know it as you see it in the chemists' and brush shops, a drab or buff piece of elasticity, very gritty and full of sand—an addition this last to give weight; or you have probably had a damp, puffed-out piece offered for sale to you in the streets by a vendor of an Israelitish cast of countenance, who asks half a crown, and comes down to sixpence.

Good. You know sponge, then, by sight pretty well, as it comes over for commercial purposes; but possibly you do not know it alive, as it is torn from the rocks to which it adheres as a black mass of quivering jelly, which, upon being pressed and beaten, gives forth a quantity of milky fluid, till the whole of the animal life is beaten out of it, and the soft skeleton only remains—elastic, imperishable—ready, after sundry washings, to be dried and packed in boxes for exportation.

There is a regular fishing season for sponge in the Mediterranean, and at one time it used nearly all to go to Smyrna, and be sold as Turkey sponge; but now, when the rocks of Syria and the Grecian Isles have been well dredged, and the collected sponge is dried, it is shipped off at once for the European markets.

We know principally by sight two kinds of sponge—the fine, close, elastic; and the dark, open sponge, familiar to us as "honeycomb." To the uninitiated it would seem that these were the produce of different countries; but it is not so, for the two qualities are found growing together, side by side, upon the same rock, and are dredged with the same net.

The fishing season lasts for about four months, and is carried on in a rough, primitive fashion, but with tolerably satisfactory results, though the thick, coarse, honeycomb sponge is far inferior in commercial value to its close-grained, firm brother, the Turkey sponge par excellence. Probably for want of research, the supply of sponge is almost confined to the Mediterranean and the West Indies. Florida and the neighbourhood of the Bahamas form the sponge hunter's ground, and it is probably the case that the turtle may make his resting-place amongst the jelly-like grove of the sponge. We get very little of the West Indian sponge, though, for it is principally disposed of in the American markets, excepting such portions as are too poor, rough, and inferior for the trade; and that is shipped here, to be bought up by the Jewish merchants, who have the monopoly of this branch of commerce here in England.

To see the late contents of a case of sponge after being moistened, one is tempted into comparisons with the Genii of the Arabian Nights who escaped from the vessel that bore Solomon's seal—inasmuch as the dry sponge is close, compact, and tightly

packed in; while the application of water swells it out to a large bulk several times the original. We have pretty good samples of this in the well-puffed-out pieces offered for sale by street vendors; and, by the way, strange stories of these pieces of sponge are told, as to their being refuse cleaned up for sale—tales that have very little foundation in fact, for the pieces are for the most part new.

We are so much accustomed to look upon sponge as a foreign production, that we forget that it is plentiful upon our own shores. The pieces found are certainly small, but none the less they are sponge—and some of them of very fine texture, though utterly worthless for economical purposes. There are few places of seaside resort where tiny pieces may not be picked up mingled with scraps of dried sea-weed and broken shells. Those who are fortunate enough to find the peculiarly shaped growth known as Neptune's glove will have something well worthy of a place in the private museum of curiosities, good, bad, and indifferent.

The collection of sponge in the Levant is dignified by the title of fishing, and partakes very much of the nature of the process practised to obtain pearls; inasmuch as divers go down in some eight or ten fathoms water, taking with them a triangular-shaped piece of stone, to conquer the buoyancy. A rope is attached to this stone, and held by companions in the boat. Once down, the diver's object is to wade rapidly to the pieces of rock bearing the growing sponge; this he rapidly tears off, till he has as much as he can conveniently carry, or till his power of remaining below is exhausted, when he pulls his rope, and is rapidly hauled up into the boat.

In some parts of the East, though, the diving is not practised; but the sponges are collected from shallower water, by means of a fork at the end of a long pole. In this way the pieces are forced or dragged from the rock, but very often at the expense of the sponge, which is thus made ragged and unsaleable. A similar process is followed out in the West Indies, a long fork being used in place of the diving.

Time back, such a thing would have been impossible without a journey abroad; but nowadays one can go to Houndsditch, and see the boxes and casks undone and shaken out, sandy and dry. We can visit the brush shops, and look upon the cleansed and

sorted sponge; and then, not satisfied, we can go down to the Brighton Aquarium or the Crystal Palace, and see—all alive O!—Mr. Lloyd's specimens of growing sponges—objects with frightful names, which object to being placed there, transplanted from their native sea, and soon die off; but prefer to come spontaneously, and live and flourish. In the Hamburg Aquarium, six or eight kinds of sponge grew in this way; and one species so abundantly, that several pounds' weight had to be periodically removed. It was no source of profit, though, for it was not the ordinary sponge of commerce.

There are cases of dried Australian sponge here, too, for those who take an interest in the matter.

As to the economic uses of sponge, what need we say more than that, free from grit, it is a blessing to one's bath. Every one knows "baby's sponge," and has felt its softness. To the surgeon the sponge is invaluable, almost as a life saver, in taking up blood and checking hæmorrhage; while the doctor used to delight in administering burnt sponge for glandular swellings and scrofula. Even the homœopath has *spongia tosta*, or toasted or burnt sponge, in his *vade mecum*. Iodine and bromine, though, which were the chemical and useful constituents, are used alone now, and the sponge is allowed to go constantly to the wash.

THE CARTRIDGE PAPERS.

BY AN OLD SOLDIER.

TO INDIA.

IN August, 1841, I started on a tour to see something of my own country, and walked from London to Liverpool; it being my intention to combine business with pleasure, and to ask for work on the way. But I had a foolish and unwholesome dread of refusal, and while I had money to carry me onwards, never made an application; although I should have been heartily glad of employment in many of the pleasant towns I passed through. From Liverpool I went to Dublin, and as my funds were nearly exhausted, I did here actually ask for work in several places, but was not successful; and before I had been long in the city I applied at the Beggars' Bush Barracks, and, after a few words with Sergeant Thompson, took the shilling for the third time, having en-

listed in the Honourable East India Company's Artillery.

After a stay of a few days in Dublin, I, with a score of others for the Queen's and Company's armies, was shipped on board the *City of Limerick* steam vessel for Gravesend, our destination being Chatham. Our first port was Falmouth, then a very quiet place, with about a dozen ships in the harbour, four of which were Falmouth mail packets, then considered the élite of sailing vessels; from thence to Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Gravesend, where we disembarked, and marched to the dépôt at Brompton, where I was, after three days' service, promoted to be pipeclay corporal by Staff-Sergeant Mackinder, who had been in the Spanish Legion.

Our domestic economy at the dépôt was very much superior to that in the Dragoons. Three times each day we assembled in the kitchen, to partake of breakfast, dinner, and tea, good and plentiful, with bread and potatoes ad libitum.

In ten days, the room of which I had the charge was full, and another draught was ordered off to Bengal, Sergeant Mackinder promising that my promotion should be confirmed with pay if I would stop behind; but I had my choice, and preferred to go instead of remaining at Brompton, where soldiering was carried on very strictly, and was as such no novelty to me; and some time in October I was among one hundred and six, artillery, infantry, women, and children, who embarked at Gravesend on board the *Glendower*, a barque, chartered to take us to Calcutta.

I cannot but speak with admiration of the order that was observed and the pains that were taken to make everything correct and comfortable for us on our voyage. Two cooks had been sent on board earlier in the day, and an excellent tea was given to us on our arrival. To each man was served out a hammock and bedding, all regularly numbered, as were the stanchions between decks in the place where each was to be hung; also two suits of duck clothing, two Osnaburgh shirts, and a pair of shoes, with a havresack containing needles, thread, knife, fork, &c.

There were also cooking utensils, and a water keg to each mess; and last but not least, a large box containing a library of books. Our knapsacks, so carefully packed for heavy marching order at Brompton,

might remain untouched all the voyage, if we chose to forbear the luxury of stockings.

Another circumstance tending to the comfort of the men generally was, that the married people were properly berthed by themselves. Our doctor was a young Scotchman going out on speculation; and our commanding officer was Captain Burnett, of the 66th Bengal Native Infantry, who, so far as my experience went, was a gentleman in every sense of the word.

I had to brush off my pipeclay stripes before leaving the dépôt, and went on board as "full private." I had a slight acquaintance with some of the artillery of the draft, but in no other place can you see a man in his true colours so well as in a five months' voyage on shipboard; and there were many on board this vessel with characteristics and colours of the most varied hues, some of whom I will describe as they come to my memory. Mackay, a light-hearted Scotchman, a calico printer from Campsey, was one of the most notable. He had been a strolling player, and could tell a good story, and his recitations were always received with unbounded applause. Ridley, a Dublin man, was a deserter from the Royal Artillery; and notwithstanding this early error, was for twenty-one years as good a soldier as was ever in the Company's service. These two were our cooks, and the comfort of the voyage depended in no slight measure on them.

What a merry lot we were generally! How quickly a soft spot was discovered, and how heavily any eccentricity was worked—how quickly an unfortunate greenhorn was drawn out—how merciless we were—how hard our hits on those who we supposed had a story to tell, and did not tell it!

We had barefooted drill in fine weather—merely the facings; and our amusements under difficulties were cricket and buck-jumping, as also cards and draughts; but what a glorious affair it was to get up a fight between decks—especially as it was against the regulations—between two of doubtful courage; how quickly seconds and tinpot holders established themselves; how all their energies and one of their eyes were occupied with the contest. One eye, though, was always on the look-out for a pair of legs cased in trousers with red stripes, that might be expected to descend the ladder, and put all concerned in irons, the penalty for this offence; how on the slightest alarm of such

an event the ring would be cleared like magic, and before Captain Burnett could bring his eyes below deck, the dark corners would be crowded with peaceable (?) men, sleeping, reading, or talking of things in general!

Two of our corporals were caught by the captain on one occasion, and were both broken, and their stripes given to others; but in this I am anticipating my second Kutcha promotion, which did not happen until our voyage was half over.

There was one Smith, remarkable for nothing in particular, but for singing a song with a chorus that would suit all voices. The song was as old as the hills, and not very sensible or sentimental, but very national; and it was pleasant to be on deck at night, and hear from below a dozen naturally musical voices trolling forth the chorus in jingling rhymes, in praise of that glorious land that was now so far away, and which we might never see more.

The ship's captain was a bit of a tyrant—a short, thickset man, with a neck—as my Irish mate said—like a Kerry bull (he died of apoplexy at Calcutta); and the first mate was a smart, gentlemanlike young man, named Armstrong.

The crew contained one black and one foreigner, and were a very good lot of men, very much better than any I have seen in five voyages, despite the Naval Reserve and the noble ships now in the Calcutta trade, the crews of which, in two voyages out of the five, were one-third foreigners.

Amongst the Cockneys on board was Morris, a watchmaker, who had failed in business in the suburbs, and who had brought with him some of his stock-in-trade, which ought to have been left to his creditors.

According to the existing rules, we were accompanied by a staff-sergeant—one of those doing permanent duty at the dépôt, who had to stay on board until the pilot left us. We had an adverse wind in the Downs, and a very rough night of it, the ship rolling so much that the chain cables and one of the carronades went to leeward every time; and the gun was only secured in time to prevent its knocking out the bulwarks.

We anchored before morning within sight of Dover Castle, and waited here ten days for a fair wind; during which time a plot was hatched by one of the men, called Thompson, aided by two others not quite

so dishonest as himself, but more homesick. They were to break open Morris's box, take his money, and go ashore at midnight in a fishing boat. The first part of the plot was carried out, but the boat was not forthcoming; and in the morning the robbery was found out, and a general search took place, nothing being then discovered. A suspected party was, however, seen at one of the carronades, and it was found loaded with watches. The man who had used such unusual ammunition was quickly in irons, and confessed all, implicating Thompson and another. Some sovereigns were found in the lining of Watson's shoe, and a ten-pound note on Thompson. They were all kept in irons during the voyage, and this was the extent of their punishment. When the wind changed, the pilot and staff-sergeant left us, I amongst many more writing home to my friends, giving them the first intimation of my whereabouts. Morris also wrote, enclosing the unlucky ten-pound note in his letter, specially notifying the fact to the man who was to post the letters. I do not know if he or the post-office was in fault, but that letter was never received; though mine, less valuable, went safely enough.

From Beachey Head to Tiger Island, the only land we saw was the Island of Trinidad, and but very few ships—not one-tenth so many as are met in a voyage nowadays; and we arrived at the Sandheads in twenty-one weeks, where we overtook the *Nankin*, with a draft that had started from the dépôt a month before us. There were at that time few or no tugs. We took wind and tide, and went up the river in a week, getting aground just below Garden Reach, where we stayed all night, and got off in the morning with some trouble, and anchored opposite Fort William.

On the morning of the 4th of February, 1842, we disembarked; and as we marched into the fort we could, I think, vie in cleanliness and smart appearance with the regiment then in garrison, one of the smartest under the Crown. We stayed in the fort one day only, and then went to Dumdum in coaches. I was rather astonished at seeing a train of black cooks march into the bomb-proof barracks at the fort, with our dinners—roast meat and pudding. This march of seven miles in coaches quite upset my notions of soldiering altogether; but a man can soon accommodate himself to any-

thing not disagreeable; and by the time we got to the cantonments, I was quite prepared for the comfortable barracks, the beds fit for a general, and the large brass-clamped boxes at the foot, fit to hold his wardrobe, which were owned by the greater part of the old hands.

After a few days' drill, a call was made for volunteers for the horse artillery, and thirty from our ship came forward, as well as fifteen from an older draft, the troops we were to join being then at Cawnpore, distant six hundred miles.

In a few days our party of volunteers were again at Calcutta, and went on board the *Burrampoota* steamboat, being the first draft that had ever been sent up in a steamboat; and we were called "the Smoke Ship Draft" ever afterwards. This was in March, and the Cabul affair had just terminated so fatally for the 44th Regt., and the 1st troop 1st brigade of Horse Artillery, they having been destroyed almost to a man; hence the necessity of a quick supply of recruits.

The authorities of Fort William were quite taken aback on this occasion, and we were aboard the steamboat twenty-four hours without rations, and were then supplied with salt provisions quite unfit for food. We had received an advance of two months' pay before leaving Dumdum, and the victuals caused a continual thirst, to quench which the river water was warm, unpleasant, and nearly as unwholesome as the arrack so plentiful in Calcutta. The consequence was as might have been expected: as soon as we got into the Soonderbunds, one of the old hands was seized with cholera, and died after two hours of intense suffering; his constant cry being for water, which, according to the rules then existing for the cure (?) of this disease, was strictly prohibited. We were at anchor when he died; but his body was sewn in canvas and thrown overboard, the land on either side being a thickly wooded morass, on which tigers and malaria made landing dangerous.

The passage through the Soonderbunds was very intricate, so much so that we had to return some distance the next day; the captain having left the mate in charge, who made a mistake in the turning to be taken. Sometimes the vessel was passing through a narrow channel where the trees swept the deck with their branches; and we kept a sharp look-out for tigers, but only saw deer and wild hogs; and then suddenly emerged

on a broad lake, where the compass and a chart were necessary to indentify the particular turning into which the vessel was to pass.

On the fourth day we had got into the Ganges, when we had another case of cholera; but at Coolnah, the resident sent us some sheep, and we threw the salt meat overboard, hoping that with it we had got rid of the complaint; but on the sixth day, another shipmate was taken, and I began to calculate how many of us would be left at the end of the voyage, according to the present rate of mortality. This, however, with the exception of one death from sun-stroke at Buxar, was the last casualty.

We anchored every night; and when our coal, which lasted through the Soonderbunds, was expended, we took wood as we wanted it at the riverside stations. Two boats were alongside for this purpose at Mirzapore, where it was high festival, and to go ashore was strictly forbidden. The ghauts were crowded with men and women in their holiday dresses, in which pink, green, and red were the prevailing colours. Processions could be seen passing the ends of the streets that abutted on the river, and sounds of music and singing came over the waters.

SIL DONNAGHAN THE PIPER.

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE PIPER SANG ABOUT THE "WIDDY MACHREE."

MORE than a week had gone by, and still the piper lingered at the Windy Gap. He had sometimes mooted the question of going; but Miss Flaherty had always announced that it was raining, or misting, or snowing, and that it would be better to wait till the next day; and so it had ended in his staying on and on at the little shop. He was not encumbered with much luggage: a coarse shirt tied up in an old handkerchief constituted his worldly all, and as for his home, it was anywhere he chose to pitch his tent for the time being.

In the day-time he rambled out to any fair that might be going on in the neighbourhood; or, if there was not such a thing to be found, he took his station by the side of a mountain, where some stray tourists or party of walkers from the city might occasionally chance to pass along. Here, in

a sheltered knoll, the dark peak towering overhead, and the silver sea beneath, he sat on a large stone—his great cotton umbrella, faded with many a storm, by his side. The shrill bur-r-ing of the pipes made a weird accompaniment to the calm plashing of the waves below; and as Sil played, his grave face grew more and more rapt and absorbed, only one foot tapped regularly on the gravel in time to the music. Whether any one was there to listen or not, he still played away. He never turned his head at an approaching footstep; but waited quietly for what God would send, and piped his very best. Whatever coppers were thrown to him during the day, he put silently on the chimneypiece in Miss Flaherty's little kitchen, and she as silently laid them out in buying savoury relishes for his supper, or in a "grain of good tay" for his breakfast.

It was new life for the solitary spinster once more to have one of the stronger sex for whom she could think, and contrive, and plan. She was a true woman: she was born to serve, and to forget herself. In the morning she said to herself, "Where is he going now, and what can I do for him?" In the evening it was, "When will he be back, and what have I got for him?"

Miss Flaherty's faded blue eyes became less faded, the colour came back to them marvellously. Her lonely face brightened so much that her little customers nudged one another, and wondered what had come to the "ould missus."

Certainly, the straw chair by the fire was not a comfortable resting place for the night. Sometimes, when she leant back too heavily, it would topple over, and she would be roused from her slumbers to find herself thrown on the kitchen floor. Again, it would give a lurch over on one side; and many a bruise did the little woman get in consequence.

"But how can I send the creature away?" she said to herself. "He's a quiet, dacent boy, and sure there's no one to mind him, and he's welcome to the only bed I have left."

No; it was impossible to banish Sil, and send away all the variety, and warmth and light that had suddenly gleamed upon her solitary existence. The house was so lively, she hardly knew it. Sil had friends—plenty of them; and sometimes, in the evening, they would drop in to smoke a social pipe and chat over the events of the week. But

on a wet evening Sil and Miss Flaherty were generally by themselves—she darning his long blue stockings, and wondering what she would give him for his supper the next day; he intent on his pipes, or perhaps beginning some old story of former days.

It was on one of those wet nights that Sil, after watching Miss Flaherty's busy fingers for some time, at last began—

"I think I must be goin' to-morrow."

"Oh, not to-morrow," cried Miss Flaherty, as she snuffed the dip candle. "Sure the full moon isn't rightly in yit, and the fine spring days 'll soon be here; and thin yez can go on the tramp if yez like."

"But I was thinkin'—"

And here Sil stopped.

He took out his tobacco, and put it into his pocket again. He laid his hand on his bagpipes, and pushed them away. At last he said—

"Did you ever hear tell ov' the Widdy Machree?"

"It's a song, isn't it?"

"It is a song, and a fine one too—at laste I used to think so. Will I hum it over for yez?"

"Do, Misther Donnaghan—sure, there's nothing like a song for raisin' the sperrits, whin the wind do be howlin' round the dure, and the rain beatin' in at the windys, as it's doin' now, God bless it."

"It's not exactly the song I'm wantin', but yez can't get songs and tchunes to fit yer fancy, unless yez make them yerself. But here it is—"

And Sil cleared his throat, and began as follows—

"Widdy Machree, now that summer is come,
Och hone, Widdy Machree!
Whin iverrything smiles, should yerself look glum?
Och hone, Widdy Machree!

See, the birds go in pairs,
And the rabbits and hares,
Why even the bears
In couples agree;
And the mute little fish
As they splash and they swish,
Och hone, Widdy Machree!

Widdy Machree, and whin winter comes in,
Och hone, Widdy Machree!
To be poking the fire all alone is a sin,
Och hone, Widdy Machree!

• Sure the shovel and tongs
To each other belongs,
While the kittle sings songs
Full of family glee;
Yit alone with your cup
Like a hermit you sup,
Och hone, Widdy Machree!

And how do yez know, with the comforts I've tould,
 Och hone, Widdy Machree!
 But you're keepin' some poor fellow out in the could?
 Och hone, Widdy Machree!

With such sins on your head,
 Sure your peace would be fled;
 Could you sleep in your bed
 Without thinkin' to see,
 Some ghost or some sprite
 That would wake you each night,
 Crying, och hone, Widdy Machree?

Then take my advice, darling Widdy Machree,
 Och hone, Widdy Machree!
 And with my advice, faith I wish you'd take me,
 Och hone, Widdy Machree!

You'd have me to desire,
 Thin to stir up yer fire;
 And sure hope is no liar
 In whisp'ring to me,
 That the ghosts would depart
 Whin you'd me near your heart,
 Och hone, Widdy Machree!"

"And so that's the 'Widdy Machree,'" said Miss Flaherty, laying down the stocking in her lap.

"It is," answered Sil. "And what do yez think ov it?"

"Well, I don't know—"

"I'm thinking," continued Sil, as he watched Miss Flaherty take another needleful of the yarn—"I'm thinkin' that whin ye're alone, ye must be mighty like the Widdy Machree, sittin' up over her bit ov fire; and it's a sin and a shame that ye should live that a-way. Why shouldn't we make a match ov it, and why shouldn't you be Mrs. Donnaghan at yer service? Sure the woman that owned me wance—God rest her sowl!—was niver half as kind or so good as yez are yerself; and why shouldn't we go on sittin' up together, snug and comfortable just as we're doin' now?"

"Ah, don't be talkin', Misther Donnaghan—look at the age ov us," said Miss Flaherty.

"Age, indeed! I'm as fresh as a daisy and as gay as a lark this minute, and whin I do be playin' 'Judy Callaghan,' or some fine rousing jig, sure I see the two eyes in yer head sparklin' and glintin' just as they did whin yez footed the ould ash tree thirty years ago. We'll niver do it younger, a cushla machree; and ye've only to spake the word, and we'll live and die together, and lay our bones side by side in the chapel yard of Knockcrea."

Miss Flaherty turned to put away her work, and two bright drops fell on Sil's old blue stocking.

"It's many a long day since any one

called me a cushla machree," said she; "and I don't say but I will think ov it."

The very next Sunday their names were called in the chapel; and when Easter Day came to a close, Sil Donnaghan and Gretta Flaherty were man and wife.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XXI.

BEFORE going up to town on leave, Mr. Dobbie had called on me one morning in a state of high excitement, with a letter open in his hand.

"I have just got this from Australia," he exclaimed, spreading out the document in question before me. "We may expect Sir John, and Lady and Miss Middleton, in September or October, he says. He has given me carte blanche, and announces his intention of not interfering in any way with my arrangements, which is very handsome on his part. He also says that Lady Middleton's health is in a precarious state, or he would have left a month earlier."

As I have previously stated, it had been my intention to bring my wife down with me to take possession together of our new home; but the sad event previously chronicled rendered that arrangement impossible to be carried out; nor was it until early in June that Mr. M'Lachlan's health was in a sufficiently satisfactory condition to permit of my becoming his son-in-law.

Under the painful circumstances previously detailed, ours was necessarily a very quiet wedding. It was celebrated in a little, old-fashioned, quiet, out-of-the-way church, and there was not a creature at it but ourselves. Emma had no bridesmaid, unless her mother might be considered to have acted in that capacity; and Robert gave her away.

I had not invited my uncle or aunt; for, to tell the truth, I was not too well pleased with them.

When I had first announced my engagement to my aunt Johanna, and asked her to call and see Emma, she had answered me thus: "They are much too high and mighty people for poor me to visit, Tom;" and it was useless trying to disabuse her of the notion. After their reverse, she doubtless

thought they were too little; and it was a long time before we met again.

As I said, our wedding was extremely quiet. Emma was dressed in white, and had the orthodox wreath of orange blossom on her head, of course.

I ordered two private broughams to take the four of us to and from church, and dismissed them as soon as we returned to Clontarf.

My father-in-law was convalescent, but not yet able to appear in public.

We had no attempt at a wedding breakfast, no rejoicing of any kind; but we were, nevertheless, very happy—three of us, at all events: Robert, his sister, and I.

We had decided upon going to Cumberland long before; and to Cumberland, accordingly, we went, and inspected the lakes and other show places in that semi-enchanted and altogether enchanting county.

I remember when, after canvassing the merits of a number of localities at The Grove one evening, we were in doubt where to go for our post-nuptial tour, Miss Marshall, with her habitual sneer, advised us to have "a pretty quarrel about it: it was so delightful," she averred, "to make friends again."

We thanked her for her disinterested advice, which neither of us had any mind to take; nor have we acted upon it since, for we are contented with the joys we know, and care not to rush after dubious delights.

I had a month's leave, and we decided upon making the most of our time.

Cumberland, with all its beauties, palled upon us before a week was out. Then we took the train to London, a city I had always had an intense longing to inspect, but in which I had little thought, just then, of dreaming away the evening of my days.

We took lodgings in a private hotel, in a quiet street, and visited every place of note in the metropolis and suburbs.

It is not my purpose to descant upon what we saw, for is not a full description of it all embodied in guide books and countless other tomes?

The fairy palace at Sydenham perhaps pleased us most of any place we saw.

We grew tired of sight-seeing ere the term of my leave had expired, and set our faces homewards while yet a week of liberty remained to be enjoyed.

The passage across to Dublin from Liverpool was something fearful; but the effects

of it passed off soon after we landed, and long before the car we had taken on the North Wall had carried us out to the cottage at Clontarf. There we spent six happy days, rambling about the green lanes, gathering primroses in the hedges—"the pallid primrose in the hedgerow blowing," as some one writes—and pearly shells on the sand-bank.

On the seventh day we returned to the north, and I was not sorry to buckle to once more, and tackle my life's task in earnest.

How everything around me seemed to have improved!

No matter how fatigued, how disheartened I might be after my round of visits, a bright, happy smile awaited me on my return, and made me feel that life was indeed worth bearing.

Happy days! Blissful time! Why, why could they not endure for ever?

CHAPTER XXII.

OUR first visitors upon my return to Dumfernaghalee with my wife were naturally Mr. and Mrs. Dobbie, who were as kind and friendly as they could possibly be; and Emma was at home with them directly.

Our eccentric rector was the next. When he chose he could make himself very agreeable, though his range of ideas was of the most limited. I cannot now recollect how we drifted into it, but, after a few commonplace remarks on the weather and the crops, he launched forth into an extravagant eulogium on game cocks and cock-fighting; which latter "chivalrous amusement," as he called it, he regretted had, by legislative interference, been prohibited.

"But I don't care, ma'am," he went on, gesticulating fiercely—"I don't care. I have the finest breed of game birds in Ireland; and I shall and will fight them when and where I please, in spite of all the parliamentary humbug in the world."

I think Emma was rather afraid of him, and glad when he took his leave.

Our next visitors arrived in a carriage drawn by a very creditable pair of bays, and were announced as the Rev. Mr. St. Clair, Lady Georgina and Miss St. Clair.

Mr. St. Clair was the vicar of the adjoining parish of Moighrath, which was worth about £200 a year; in addition to which, he was private chaplain at Ardmore House, and had a private fortune double, some said

treble, the amount of the emoluments he derived from his chaplaincy and living.

At the time of which I write he was about fifty-one or fifty-two: a stout, jolly-looking, middle-aged gentleman, who fairly showed his years, and never tried to hide them. His face was full and fresh-coloured, and was surmounted by a bushy crown of curly hair, once black, but beginning to be plentifully tinged with grey. He wore his whiskers round his face, only shaving his upper lip, and time had meddled less with these appendages than with the covering of his head.

His good temper was imperturbable, almost; and even when disturbed, which extreme provocation could alone accomplish, he soon regained his equanimity, and the storm shortly blew over without leaving any trace behind.

The Lady Georgina was tall and slight, and by no means destitute of a considerable amount of constitutional vigour, although she imagined herself to be delicate, and loved that others should be of the same opinion. She never lost an opportunity of parading her supposed infirmities and afflictions before a certain-to-be-sympathising audience; but she was capable, nevertheless, when occasion demanded, of undergoing an amount of anxiety and fatigue that would have completely overpowered her more robust mate.

Miss St. Clair was a buxom, countrified young lady, about twenty. She affected a lisp; wore her hair en baigneuse, and well brushed off her forehead, the better to display her full and ruddy face. Seen beside my Emma, I thought her hideous; yet in the county she was generally admired.

There was also a numerous succession of olive branches, of whom more, perhaps, by and by.

The St. Clairs considered themselves, and were admitted by their neighbours to rank with, the aristocracy of the county. They visited at Ardmore House, and also at Penny Castle, when the Marquis of Pennyletter was at home, which was for about a fortnight each year during the partridge shooting season. They were on terms of intimacy with the Bishop of Highshire, whose wife was first cousin to the Duke of Lyttleton, so that the Rev. Rupert's non-promotion was a matter of wonder to every one in the diocese except himself.

Any person they condescended to notice

was at once taken up by the lesser fry of gentility in the neighbourhood, so that it was a matter of some importance to a newly arrived professional man to secure their patronage and support.

His reverence was most friendly, the Lady Georgina most affable, and Miss St. Clair most charmingly gushing. On taking leave both ladies kissed my darling, and they all hoped soon to have the pleasure of seeing us at the rectory.

I had met them before, and liked them very much. Emma took quite a fancy to her new friends, who had promised to introduce us to "a number of nice people in Pennyletter."

"What a sad event was the sudden death of poor Sir Stewart," sighed Lady Georgina; "just as he was on the point of being married, too."

"Very sad indeed," I replied.

"And quite a young man," continued her ladyship. "He could not have been more than thirty."

"He was every day of forty, my dear," interposed the vicar, suddenly breaking off in the middle of an animated account of some recent dispute with our rector, Mr. Smith, with which he had been entertaining my wife.

"The new baronet," continued her ladyship, unheeding her husband's correction, "is an Australian, I hear. Is it true, doctor?"

"No, madam," I replied, "not an Australian; but he has lived and practised for many years in Melbourne, where it is currently reported that he has made a large fortune."

"Indeed. Were you acquainted with him?"

"Slightly. But my friend Woodward, the new curate, knew him very well; and he is known to, and loved by, all the colonial churches."

"Dear me!" exclaimed her ladyship—"I am so glad to hear that; for do you know, doctor, I have been told that he is a Dissenter."

"You have been correctly informed, Lady Georgina," I replied. "He is a member of the Methodist Church, and has very frequently occupied the pulpit in one of our suburban chapels."

I need not repeat the animated discussion, I cannot call it conversation, that ensued.

The Lady Georgina was not exactly a

High Churchwoman, as that compound word is at present understood; but she stood up uncompromisingly for what she called "Divine rights" and "apostolical succession;" and held all manner of dissent from her views on things ecclesiastical as unutterably abominable.

I shall leave the reader to picture for himself her disgust when she found we belonged—for my Emma was a Presbyterian—to a class she stigmatised as "schismatics, if not heretics."

Poor Lady Georgina! she was not without her good points; but charity towards her neighbours in religious matters was not one of them.

Mr. St. Clair was much more moderate, and was not unfrequently upbraided by his lady for his lukewarmness; but the worthy gentleman was by no means thin-skinned, and bore his scolding with perfect equanimity.

He was certainly one of the best men I have ever met: there was not one atom of humbug or pretension about him, save in the matter of his change of name; for he had written himself Sinclair until his marriage with the ninth daughter of the seventh Earl of Sansterre, when he "reverted to the ancient orthography of his name."

Yes, that pardonable little piece of vanity apart, I dare to say he was as nearly perfect as a man can be: generous, warm-hearted, earnest, and hard-working, when he might have lived a life of slothful ease. It is a pity there are not more men like him in the world.

In the present instance he managed, after two or three abortive attempts, to cast oil upon the troubled waters, and appease the storm.

"I feel strongly," exclaimed her ladyship, when the compromise had been effected—"I feel very strongly on this subject, doctor, and I hope you will excuse my warmth."

I bowed, and after a minute or so of silence, the conversation reverted to the new baronet and his family.

"Have you ever met Lady Middleton, doctor?"

"Yes, Lady Georgina. She is an amiable, truly good woman; and has done an immensity of good among the poor in Melbourne."

"I am very glad to hear that. We sadly want a few more such persons among our

resident gentry. There is only one daughter, I believe?"

"Only one."

"Is she pretty?"

"I have not seen her since she was a child: then she was very beautiful."

"Oh," exclaimed Miss St. Clair, addressing herself to my wife—"you'll have to look out by and by, Mrs. Cochrane."

"What for?" inquired Emma, innocently, and blushing on hearing herself called by her new name and title, to which she had not grown quite accustomed.

"Why, that the doctor does not fall in love again with his old flame," explained Miss St. Clair.

I could not help laughing outright.

"If you call a child of twelve or so an old flame, Miss St. Clair, it is not what we are in the habit of doing in Australia."

The young lady blushed, and looked rather confused.

"The new curate, too, is an Australian, is he not?" asked Lady Georgina.

"No, Lady Georgina," I replied. "He lived in Australia for a few years, but was born and brought up in Ireland—somewhere in the county Clare, I believe."

"Is he clever?" asked Miss St. Clair.

"I think so," I replied.

"What a pity he has married a servant out of a boarding-house, quite old enough to be his mother!" remarked her ladyship, who generally contrived to obtain the earliest possible information upon every point.

"Mrs. Woodward is certainly some years older than her husband," I answered; "but she is a very amiable person, and never was a servant. She and her sister, indeed, kept a boarding-house, but Miss Fernley took a much more active part in its management than ever her sister, Mrs. Woodward, did."

"Ah," exclaimed her ladyship. "I was otherwise informed."

"Incorrectly so, madam, I assure you. I lived for three years with them, and speak from personal knowledge."

"When will you come over and dine with us at the rectory?" asked Mr. St. Clair—with a view, no doubt, to changing the subject, and addressing himself to my wife, who looked over at me.

"Any day that suits you," I replied, "will suit us, Mr. St. Clair; that is, provided, of course, no unexpected call should summon me away—a contingency for which I am always obliged to be prepared."

"Of course; but, in any case, Mrs. Cochran might come. We can send the carriage for her," said her ladyship.

"You are very kind," answered my wife; "but there is no occasion to give you that trouble—we have our own car."

"True," replied her ladyship—"I had forgotten; but, you see, Dr. Potts' predecessor kept no vehicle. Pray excuse my mistake."

Emma blushed, and glanced at me in an appealing manner, as much as to say—

"When will these people go away?"

But they had no intention of leaving us so suddenly.

"When do you expect Mr. Woodward?" asked her ladyship.

"To-morrow," I replied. "He would have been here last week, only the curate's house had to be put in repair. Mr. Dobbie says the late occupants had left it in a rather neglected condition."

"I should think so," exclaimed Lady Georgina. "Why, I know for a fact they kept bees in the back parlour, and hens in one of the best bed-rooms."

Much more gossip of a totally uninteresting description followed; and at last the St. Clair family rose up and took their leave, warmly repeated their invitation, and drove off with a flourish down Dumfrieshailee High-street, bowing affably to the crowd of five women, one old man, and about a dozen children, who had assembled to witness, and loudly cheered them on, their departure.

Several of the farmers and their "good ladies" subsequently "paid their respects;" and, when the stiffness of a first visit had worn itself off, proved very agreeable acquaintances.

Things in general were by no means as bad as, at first sight, they had appeared.

After a while we became on visiting terms with several families resident in and around Pennyletter, who composed the aristocracy of the neighbourhood; amongst whom we spent a very pleasant time.

We did nothing much, for a month or six weeks, but pay and receive visits. There was a good deal of monotony about the business, to be sure, as the conversation at each house was but a repetition of that in which we had just been involved—consisting, as it did, at first, of meteorological observations; and then of inquiries and answers respecting Sir John Middleton and

family, or the new curate, as Woodward was universally designated. But we enjoyed a good laugh now and then, which repaid us for a good deal of bore.

At the appointed time we dined at Moighrath Vicarage, which was a capital old house, with a grand old oak staircase running up through its centre, the only fault of which was that it somewhat curtailed the proportions of the various rooms; but it was, nevertheless, a very comfortable place—that is, might have been made so had not the inhabitants been totally ignorant of the meaning of the word.

In the drawing-room, for instance, not one article of furniture, not a single ornament, was in its natural place. Books and periodicals lay scattered about the room in every direction; photographs and photographic albums were strewn on the floor; overgrown plants blocked up the windows, and hungry birds screamed shrill notes of distress from the chimneypiece or the top of the piano; which instrument, whatever its original pretensions might have been, had long settled down into an unpretending dumb-waiter; and woe betide the rash stranger who, tempted by its appearance, albeit none of the most attractive, endeavoured to extract melody from its chipped and yellow keys, for its discordant notes were capable of torturing the least musical of ears.

Yet Lady Georgina and her daughters hammered away at it by the hour on state occasions, to their own complete satisfaction, and in happy unconsciousness of the torture they were inflicting on their hearers.

"We thought to have had some friends to meet you," exclaimed her ladyship, as she affectionately embraced my wife in the hall; "but we have been disappointed. It will be their own loss, however, and we shall have you all to ourselves."

The more we saw of the St. Clairs, the more we wondered. There was no denying their good qualities, their unbounded hospitality, their genuine good-heartedness, and readiness to oblige; but they were absolutely without method. I never saw greater confusion than we witnessed at their table, where all was hurry and scramble.

They had a number of servants, too—so many, in point of fact, that they were really in each other's way; and yet the young folks were perpetually running hither and thither, at their father's or mother's bidding.

Lady Georgina especially was perpetually on the watch; now admonishing one of the domestics, now one of the children: "Now, Sarah, Mrs. Cochrane has no bread;" "Edmund, give the doctor some ale;" "Rupert, my dear, you are forgetting your visitors;" and so on, until at length the weary repast came to an end.

I sat with the vicar and the eldest son for a few minutes, when we joined the ladies in the drawing-room, where my wife was attempting to extract music from the old piano.

Lady Georgina began asking about the Woodwards. Were they settled?

"Yes," I replied, "I believe they are."

"When will you call on them, papa?" inquired her ladyship, addressing her husband.

"Whenever you like, my dear," he replied; adding, for our information, "this is the nineteenth since we came to live here—twenty——"

"I do wish you would not be so dreadfully particular about dates, my dear," exclaimed his wife. "If you are so careless yourself of the flight of time, you might have some consideration for the feelings of those who may not be quite so indifferent."

"I need not fear to hurt yours, in that case, my dear; for you look now, if anything, younger and prettier than when we were married, twenty——"

"There—there, papa, for goodness' sake hush," cried the lady—smiling, nevertheless, at the compliment paid her. "Answer my question—when will you call on the new curate?"

"Whenever you like, my dear. When do you propose paying your visit?"

"Not to-morrow, for Mrs. Copeland will be here; nor the next day, for really Louisa and I must go in to Pennyletter; and Saturday—well, I think Saturday will do. But there, how tiresome! you will be writing your sermon, and will not be able to come. How very tiresome! and I do so want to see Mrs. Woodward. I am told she is such a very interesting person. How provoking!"

"Provoking that she should be interesting, my dear?"

"No, papa; but so tiresome you can't come with us on Saturday."

"If you so very much wish it, my dear, I will try and make the sacrifice. I have to see Smith about Mr. Annely," said the vicar.

The subject then dropped.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

A CLEARING UP.

"WHAT'S that there, sir? Why, the Clearing House. What does it clear? Well, that's a rum un, that is! I thought everybody knowed what the Clearing House was."

I repeated that I did not know what it was, nor what it cleared, and that I believed there were a few more folk in the same predicament. My companion laughed heartily; smoothed his face; glanced at your Casual Observer; and then, evidently discovering something irresistibly comic in his aspect or ignorance, burst out laughing once more.

He was a man in a corduroy suit and a cap, much frayed and glazed by friction with boxes and portmanteaus. In fact, it needed not the letters on his collar and cap to tell you that he was a porter in the service of one of the great railway companies.

"You'll excuse me, sir," he said. "I didn't ought to laugh, but it seems so rum as a gent like you don't know what the Clearing House is. Why, I've knowed it from a boy so high."

It was evident that my friend must have been tolerably knowing when he was "so high," which elevation was shown by a hand held about fourteen inches above the pavement. However, I apologized for my ignorance, and hinted that my friend might have learned a good deal through passing his time in the neighbourhood of Fuston-square.

"Toe be sure," he replied. "I've been here more'n thutty years—that's so; and, as you haven't, why of course you can't be expected to know."

There was a gentle tone of pity about the man's speech which was more soothing than irritating; so I said—

"Well, what does the Clearing House clear?"

"Heverythink, sir—I mean everything. Come into my room here, and I'll tell you. There, sir—sorry it's only a stool, but the company thinks, if we had chairs with backs, we should get lazy. You see, it's like this. The Clearing House is a sort of sieve through which all the railway companies runs and gets sorted.

"You don't understand? Well, let's try again. This Clearing House is a independent sort of place, full of clerks, whose work is to sort all the business done by all the railway companies together—passengers,

parcels, goods, and rolling stock. Now do you see?"

I was beginning to have a glimmer of light, and said so.

"Oh, I'll make you understand before I've done with you," said my friend. "Don't you be afraid of that. Look here: you know, railways got to grow to such a size, and joined on to one another so, that the public didn't like being bothered, in a long journey, to take tickets again and again, and have to change about from company to company. Say, now, you wanted to go to Land's End—putting a case, you know; well, in the old fashion, you'd have had to take a ticket by Great Western from Pantton to Bristol."

"From where?"

"Pantton—Pad-ding-ton—to Bristol, by the Great Western Railway. Then out you gets, and changes carriages into the Bristol and Exeter, after taking a fresh ticket. Then, bless you, when you got to Exeter you'd have to go through it again, and take a ticket for Plymouth by the South Devon line. When you got there, you'd have to begin again, and go half the rest of your journey by the Cornwall Railway, and t'other half by the West Cornwall Railway. Nice job, you see: a journey over five railways, and ticket-taking and changing on each. But now, here's the good of your Clearing House: you take your ticket at Pantton, right through, and pays the lot.

"Well but," says you, 'then the Great Western bags all the money when you go, and the West Cornwall all when you take your ticket at Penzance to come back.' Stop a bit—here's where your Clearing House comes in, and makes out the bill of profits and losses.

"Here you are," it says, 'here's your ticket right through, so much.' Then—

"Great Western, so many miles—so much for you;

"South Devon, so many miles—so much for you;

"And West Cornwall, so many miles—so much for you."

"Thankee," says the companies—"it saves no end of trouble;" and they make ready to pocket the money.

"Stop a bit," says Mr. Clearing House. 'We haven't settled yet about the train.'

"No more we have," says Great Western, suddenly remembering. 'That was my engine.'

"Yes," says West Cornwall; 'and my tender, though.'

"My break," says South Devon.

"They were all my carriages, though," says Bristol and Exeter.

"Make yourselves quite easy, gentlemen," says Mr. Clearing House. 'There's the account, profit and loss. Look it through.'

"They look it through, sir, and there you are, all reckoned and charged against each: this one so much for use of engine, that one so much for use of carriages; number one for tender, number two for break, and so on, every carriage being registered before the train starts, and every company being credited or debited for the use of that bit of rolling stock. So that, you see, the companies can't wrangle, because it's all settled for them like in a court of law; and they go on like that, each one getting his proper share for the amount of work he does, and the working materials and tools he finds.

"Very good, but that aint all the Clearing House does. Why, there's the lost goods and luggage that has gone astray out of its regular ways to be found out; and they'll have notice sent to them, and make inquiries all over England, Scotland, and Wales for the things, till they're found. Sometimes it's only a box or a carpet bag; but very often, maybe, it's a truck-load of goods gone where it's no business to be gone; and Mr. Clearing House feels for it like, down first one line and then down another, till he gets hold of the right thread, and then pulls it till he brings the thing back to where it ought to be. Do you see now?"

I replied that I was beginning to understand.

"Well, 'taint my fault if you don't—I'm a telling you all plain enough, anyhow. Perhaps you'd like to know a little about the goods trains. Well, like the passenger trains, there's some one to book and keep account of them at every junction—which is, of course, where one company's line joins another. Well, my gentleman examines the whole train—engine, tender, trucks, and breaks; and not only them, but the sheets—tarpaulins, you know—and ropes. Why, bless you, he knows 'em all at a glance: every company's ropes are known by the colour of the strands, and of course the sheets are painted with the company's name in big letters, so that there's no difficulty about them. They're all numbered, too.

Then one of the clerks who's at the junction looks over these sheets and ropes and trucks. All right. So on they go to the next junction, where the man who examines finds that one of the sheets is split down the middle. All right—he enters it; and notes are afterwards compared to show that when that truck went on the Tow Row and Rugged Vale Railway, from Slowby Junction, the sheet was all right; but when it came off that rail at Shuntly, it was all wrong; so as the sheet belongs to the Long South Northern Company, the Tow Row are charged by the Clearing House, and have to pay.

“So it is if a truck's damaged in shunting. The clerks of the Clearing House know where it passed over safely, and are able to put the damage down to the right parties—company, you know—book the cost against them, and it's put in their bill against settling-day comes round.

“Only fair, you know; for look how hard it would be for the Midshires to have to suffer for the carelessness of the North Counties' servants, just because the Midshires trucks were going across the North Counties' lines.

“Tired, sir? Well, if you aint, I'll go on a bit longer. Well, here's another thing about charges for things going over different lines. Say a goods train has to go over forty miles of number one, forty miles of number two, and forty miles of number three—all different railways, you know. Well, then, you'd suppose that they'd all get equal shares for the train going over their line. To be sure, so they would if the lines were all alike; but number one railway was made over the flats, like the Great Eastern; number two has a tunnel in it, like the Box; and number three was built nearly all on arches, like the South-Eastern; consequently, numbers two and three, being expensive lines, are allowed three times and twice as much mileage as number one line, which cost very little money to make.

“There's no dispute about it, for the Clearing House settles and regulates it all; and the companies get fair treatment, for it's the umpire for 'em all.

“Then, again, about the rolling stock, as we call all the trucks, carriages, and things. I dare say you've often seen a carriage or truck of one company, perhaps in the north, running on a line in the south, three hundred miles away from home. Forgotten, perhaps you think, and likely to be months before it

gets back to its own company. Don't you make any mistake about that. Trucks and carriages are too valuable for such little games; and every truck, sheet, and rope is booked and entered from place to place, and the company that holds it is charged if the things aint returned in good time: the Clearing House does it, keeps account of 'em all; and if you think that, when once a company has got hold of a lot of another company's trucks, it can use 'em just as it likes, you're mistaken. It can use them, but it has to pay for their hire.

“Stop a bit—I haven't done yet. Here's another little thing the Clearing House sees to. Say one line has a terminus at a seaport, and the fishing smacks bring in great quantities of fish to send up to London, to reach which it will have to go over three lines, which we'll call North, Middle, and South. Well, North is by the seaport, and collects the fish, loads the trucks, and sends off the train—the loading taking a lot of time. Middle railway does nothing but let the fish go over it; but the South railway again in London has another job, for not only does the fish go over its line but comes into its terminus, where it has to be not only unloaded, but delivered at Billingsgate by men with horses and vans.

“Well, of course that's extra work, and the Clearing House settles it by giving North and South what is called ‘terminals’—that is, payment for loading, unloading, and delivery, and all regulated carefully, so as to be fair and square for all alike.

“Ah, it's a wonderfully useful thing, that Clearing House, and I don't see what they'd do without it now, as there's about a hundred railway companies all in full work, and it's only by careful management that all things are kept so beautifully square. You see, no one has any cause to grumble, because the place is on purpose to make all right for all of them, and there's no favouritism of any kind. Why, if there's any doubt or dispute about anything, some of the companies meet, and get it all settled just and right and fair.

“Well, there you are, then, sir; there you have what the Clearing House is, in plain English. It's a sort of umpire to see fair and keep account for all the railways, saving them trouble and bother, and making it more convenient for people who travel. Just as I've told you: do you want to go a long journey over five or six lines, you book

through, your tickets are collected, sent to the Clearing House, and the proper share is set aside for each company. Damages to all rolling stock are booked against them as does the damage; so long as the Clearing House knows the company, that's enough for it. The company itself may find out the particular station, and row its own servants. Goods trains are looked after, and the proper share again settled for each after 'terminals,' and hire of trucks, sheets, ropes, and baskets, have been deducted or charged against each company; and all regulations are made about the value of different lines, and how many miles are to be allowed for particular expensive bits, tunnels, viaducts, and river bridges. Bless you, it clears everything; sees that the cattle sent up from the north aint delayed, nor the fish neither, for those sorter goods would soon lose value. Why, cases have been known where a goods train has been shunted to let a fast train go by, and two trucks have been left behind. These trucks were full of mackerel, and were kept back two days, to arrive in London fit for nothing. Well, the company had to pay damages to the fish sender, and the Clearing House settles whose fault it was, and charges accordingly. Lastly, I did tell you about the lost parcels and boxes and so on—it clears all them; and really, I think, sir, as I've cleared it all pretty well now for you, and—clear my throat, sir? Well, you know what it says, sir, about gratooties to railway servants; but since you make such a point of it, sir, why I won't say no.

"You do see it all, then, sir, now?" he asked.

I said I did.

"It's a regular clearing up, isn't it, sir?"

I replied that it was; and my husky-voiced friend, after favouring me with a solemn nod, left me to attend an engagement he had at his place—a very particular engagement, he said, with the air of a Cabinet Minister.

I saw him afterwards: it was with a barrowful of luggage, which he was clearing out of the station.

GOLDEN LIL.

LILY we called her—Lil—Lil!
Why the name seemed to float in the air—
Ay! matey, seems to float still;
For one can't seem to think she's not there,

Living, and lightsome, and free,
With her golden hair tossed in the wind;
And yet when I heard it, you see,
I most cried my aching eyes blind.
Yes I—a big rough hulking he,
With a hide 'bout as rough as a bear;
But, bless you, it warn't only me
As turned soft when we larnt of the scare.

She was nobody's child, so they say;
But she came on our camp like a charm;
And it seemed, from the very first day,
That the bairn came to keep us from harm.
All up at the gulches, and creeks,
There was fever, and Injun, and fight;
There was flood; they was snowed up for weeks;
And a stampede of buffler one night:
But with us, p'raps the roughest lot out,
Not a thing came to trouble the camp—
No worries to put us about,
Nor a glint of war-paint on the ramp.
The gold—why it washed out like crumb,
Wherever we tried a fresh claim;
And for drinking—all sober! Well, come!
All the boys here will tell you the same.

It was all on along of that wean:
She could lead the lads here with a thread.
Why some on us used to keep clean!
And now—I can't b'leeve it—she's dead.
It seems but t'other day she would sing
Like a bird—like a lark there on high;
And her sweet little trill how 'twould ring
From among the dark firs to the sky.
Lord! I've seen some rough cuss drop his pick,
To rub the hair out of his way,
And then a great smile would come thick,
As he'd peer where the sweet critter lay.
Why didn't Bill Smithers spoil Brown,
'Cause he rapped out a swear 'fore the child?
Whizzistus! he knocked him slap down;
And Bill of our lot the most mild.

She'd the best of the camp that had she:
Every boy would have give all he got;
And when sharing the gold, you might see
There was always set little Lil's lot—
And that not so gold as her hair,
As it danced in the sun while she played—
When she lay there so pretty and fair,
"Why the bairn's only sleeping!" we said.
We wouldn't believe it—don't yet—
They stole her—the devils—one day—
If for each golden hair we could set
Our heel on an Injun—I'd pray!

I'd tell you—the trail—and the fight—
How we got her and brought her—at dusk;
But somehow I haven't got right,
And my throat feels like full of a husk.
But I'll show you—just there: where the pines
Seem all sighing as soft as the sea;
And the sun like her golden hair shines,
As it dances in webs through each tree.
We laid her down there—such a nest—
Oh, so little!—and lined it with flowers;
Then we knelt till the sun in the west
Told as how we'd been staying for hours.
And then, with a sob, one Dick Gray
Dropt first shovel of soil of the lot;
But stopped, just to try to say pray,
Though the words came so slow—most forgot.

Yes—just there! There's the name on that pine—
 I cut it, rough like, with my knife.
 Dick Gray? Well, mate, yes: the name's mine;
 But the sun seems gone out of my life.
 See—L I L—Lil. That was all
 I cut; and the others stood by.
 Now spring; and I did it last fall—
 So long, mate, and yet, oh, so nigh!
 Oh, Lil! Lil! My little one! There—
 She was like pure gold veined in our clay.
 There are angels enough and to spare!
 Why did God want to take *her* away?

TABLE TALK.

TALKING of the troubles of companies, and the difficulties they encounter in their attempts to establish such a check system as would enforce honesty amongst their servants, a friend said that the omnibus proprietors need not be so particular, for at the outside they were only defrauded of a few pence at a time. This acted like a challenge to another present, who immediately did a little sum for our behoof. "To take a case," he said; "suppose an omnibus makes sixteen journeys a day, and that the conductor cheats his employers of one penny only each journey, that will be sixteen pence per day. But there are say 500 omnibuses running; therefore the amount lost by the proprietors will be 8,000 pence, which amounts to 56,000 pence weekly, and over £12,000 per annum. Let this be too much or too little as an estimate, it is evident that the few pence taken often will amount to a startling sum in the aggregate." Who can invent a plan to ensure all money taken passing to the company?

NOW THAT PEOPLE are about to rush abroad, they will perhaps listen to a few words on a subject which will certainly interest them, though they may disagree with me. My idea has always been that the Cathedral of Cologne—vast, beautiful, majestic though it be—is not a work of real genius. In fact, it is hardly too much to say that it might have been designed by an extremely careful and intelligent stonemason, with any amount of money at his disposal. Compare it with the Cathedral of Rouen, and you will at once see my meaning. That edifice is a mass of errors, all of which Cologne avoids. But it also avoids its beauties. Everything about it is desperately correct. No faults, but no imagination, nothing picturesque—all lines, angles, squares, and triangles. Let any man

of taste compare it with the Cathedral of Chartres, or with that most lovely and graceful of all buildings, the Church of Saint Owen at Rouen, and I am sure he will at once agree with me.

THE *Daily News* has lately had, in common with other papers, an advertisement of a patent medicine, in which it is stated that a gentleman, now eighty-seven years old, has taken the pills for forty years. "Bismillah!" as a Turk would say, what a heap the poor old gentleman must have swallowed, and even now they do not seem to have cured him. Will he resort to a fresh medicine, or try another box?

MOST PEOPLE MUST remember the story of the Scotch gardener who possessed such a strong attachment to whisky that he valued it more than position, place, or character; that cut from all means of obtaining the potent fluid he still continued to get disguised in liquor; and search being made, it was found that he had turned his tool shed into a distillery, and a watering can into a still, while the wash from which he obtained his spirit was composed of carrots from an adjoining bed. In fact, there is no end to the substances from which alcohol may be obtained; but the latest discovered is certainly the most unexpected—to wit, flint stones. And this was proved by Dr. Emerson Reynolds at the Royal Institution, not by mechanical means truly, but by chemical; for though carbon has heretofore been looked upon as the sole alcohol-forming element, experiment shows that from silicon, the chief constituent of flint, can be obtained a body "resembling in chemical action and even in appearance the well-known alcohol of wine." Good news this for drunkards; but knowing how soon a spark may be obtained from flint, may we not dread that a spirit of this kind might have a greater tendency than the old to produce spontaneous combustion?

MR. PLIMSOLL'S WORK is so good that its quality is undeniable. Like all enthusiastic men, though, he is finding the troubles attendant upon those who attempt to stir the celebrated British barnacle from its hold upon the British ship. Why, whatever is Mr. Plimsoll thinking about? He must not attack the Circumlocution Office in his bold, straightforward English fashion, and expect

things to be done because they want doing. Why, the thing is absurd. Here are so many lives likely to be lost before the Royal Commission can report, and get the evils they find made unlawful. Very good; then the men should not have gone to sea, knowing how dangerous it is; and, in the meantime, Mr. Plimsoll ought to go to work as did one Arthur Clennam—or rather, as Mr. Clennam was told to go to work. Here are his instructions: "You'll memorialise that Department (according to regular forms, which you'll find out) for leave to memorialise this Department. If you get it (which you may, after a time), that memorial must be entered in that Department, sent to be registered in this Department, sent back to be signed by that Department, sent back to be countersigned by this Department, and then it will begin to be regularly before that Department. You'll find out when the business passes through each of these stages, by asking at both Departments till they tell you." At the same time, it may be interesting to some of our readers to know that it has been stated in Parliament that a vessel lately found to be leaky had baskets of sawdust drawn beneath her hull, that the minute pieces of wood might be sucked by the indraught in between the seams of the ship, and help to fill them up. The idea was ingenious; but it is provoking to hear that it did not prove effectual, for the ship went to the bottom.

ARE WE DEVELOPING? Have we really been ascidians, according to Darwin, and gone on rising to a culminating point as men, to begin descending on the other side, and gradually become fiends? The question is asked on account of the two discoveries lately made at Curtis and Harvey's powder mills, at Hounslow, where flint stones have been found in the mills where the gunpowder was being ground. One stone was crushed by the rollers without damage, and the second was discovered in time. The chances were that in the crushing sparks would be evolved, and fifty or sixty fellow-creatures blown to atoms. Explosions at Hounslow have not been unfrequent, in spite of the proprietors' care. No wonder, when such diabolical outrages are possible. But this is not all. According to *Iron*, an infernal machine for the destruction of ships has been invented, to use either upon those which have been heavily in-

sured, or, if possible, those of an enemy. The little affair is very simple: it is merely a metallic block, made to resemble a lump of coal, charged with some explosive, and then placed in the coal bunkers of the doomed ship. Some time after, its fate is to be shovelled with the coal into the furnace, and then— Well, it is to be hoped that the sufferings of the poor creatures scalded, shattered, and burnt would be short, for the vessel which bore the infernal creation must sink. The question asked, though, is surely not out of place: Are we developing into fiends?

OUR CORRESPONDENT forwards the following apropos of Madame Malibran, after which we hope to leave her memory in peace:—"Not being myself old enough, by several years, to remember Malibran's death, I found out its particulars in two gazetteers, both of which refer it to London. The fact of its having actually happened at Manchester shows, as Macaulay says, the slovenly manner in which most people are content to think—as, I suppose, both were misled by her funeral having been at London. In fact, she died and was interred at Manchester; but the English and the Belgians, being both anxious to show a last mark of respect to a woman of such transcendent abilities and universal popularity, the former gave her a public funeral at London, and the latter had her body removed from Manchester to Laeken, near Brussels, where I have seen her tomb."

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Every MS. should bear the Name and Address of the Sender.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

The Editor will only be responsible for their being safely re-posted to the addresses given.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 294.

August 16, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XVI.

RIVIERE ENDS HIS NARRATIVE.



H, but it is not right that I should tell all this before miladi. Would she wish to hear?" said Rivière.

"Oh, yes—yes," exclaimed Lady Lawler, who was flushed and excited by the narrative.

"But it makes me in her eyes as a low brawler," said Rivière. "But what will you? It was no

time then for waiting. I could not challenge the villain, and meet him like a gentleman, with sword or pistol. Ah, no—the lâche would have had me arrested, and sent off to prison once more; so I met him as I could.

"Marie would have sprung between us when she saw that he knew of our being there, and came hurrying to see whether we were those he sought. Ah! if he had known, he would have called for help. But he did not, but rushed across with the eagerness of some beast that scents blood. And I—I threw into the blow I struck him, full in the face, all the hatred and bitterness of my injuries; and then, as he fell, striking his head heavily upon the pave, I was about to hurl myself with itching fingers at his throat. My nationality was asserting itself, and I should have been tearing him like my countrymen—like a brute beast—when a tender, gentle hand was laid upon my arm, and a sweet voice whispered—

"Come!"

"Ma foi! I was a prisoner again—a captive to her gentle sway; and Marie led me away swiftly, before people came up—before there was danger for me. It was painful to have to leave the cause of all my pain; but Marie said 'Come!' and it was enough. I went, and she hurried me through street after street in the darkness, till we were far away from where Lemaire lay prone. My hot, excited feelings, too, grew more calm, and soon we were away from danger—I a prisoner still to that tender, wifely love.

"That night we left Paris behind, trusting to the roads for protection, and avoiding everybody we could as we journeyed on and on to seek the coast, and from thence an asylum in some free land where we might be free—safe from the enemies who would, I knew, soon be on my track.

"But there, my friends, it is enough. I should weary you if I told you of all our troubles. Enough when I tell you that we tramped along the roads, light-hearted and happy in our reunion, cheerful in the pleasant sunshine, sad and low-spirited in the storm. We were beggars as we went along the road; but what mattered, so that we were together? I tell you that, could we have been free from the dread of capture, our life there would have been bliss.

"Often and often we lay down trustfully beneath the pure, soft sky, with the purple grapes hanging in bunches above our heads, and the soft winds whispering through the lanes. We had no other covering than that of heaven; but the life was sweet, save when I was awakened from dreams of my prison, of the grating, and the dancing flames. But that was not often, and there was always Marie's voice to whisper to me of safety; and then I slept again, to be awakened by the sunshine and the sweet song of birds, light and refreshed. Then there would be water by some stream, and the loaf of bread we bought, upon which we feasted happily, thankfully, and journeyed on.

"But, mon ami, Sir Richard, this was, after all, most terrible to a delicate woman. I saw that it could not endure, and longed for the day when we could reach the sea-shore; for our journey was slow, and we went far out of our course, so as to baffle pursuers. If we had followed the regular route, I must have been taken again and again; but going through simple villages, wandering through narrow lanes, our path lay clear. I longed now for the coast, and would have gone straight had we dared. Our object was to try and find some fisherman who would give us a passage across. We had little money; but Marie possessed a ring or two, which we thought would suffice. We had time to bring nothing else.

"At last we reached a little village in Normandy; and there, as we inhaled the salt, free breeze, and saw the little vessels floating upon the waves, my heart gladdened within—but only to grow chill and heavy again, for the dread came upon me that our enemies might be here, and waiting for us.

"But no; there was danger, perhaps, but we saw it not. I spoke with the fishers; and, after some demur, they agreed to bring us over, each for a ring; and at last, when we were dancing over the waves with the coast line behind us growing more distant hour by hour, I felt that we were leaving home, but also danger, behind. Still, each sail we passed made me thrill lest it should contain a pursuer; and again and again I thought that we were to be captured within sight of freedom. They were false fears, though, and we were landed at last in this free land—beggars, but in safety.

"We were safe, but now our sorrows seemed to be on the increase. Had we not known that there were no spies dogging our steps, we must have sunk from utter weariness. But we knew that we were free—free; that in this land the exile might find rest; and we toiled on to reach London—to seek the only people we knew—to ask for charity—for a piece of bread and for shelter, till we can find means to struggle with the world."

The narrative was at an end; and Sir Richard Lawler stood frowning as, with streaming eyes, his lady approached their guest, to lay her hand upon his arm, and say, in subdued tones, a few words that he could not catch. He could divine their

meaning, though, as Rivière caught Lady Lawler's hand in both his own, and kissed it again and again, his dark eyes flashing as he raised them to hers.

Then he turned to Sir Richard.

"But your dear lady is too good," he said, in husky tones. "She is an angel. I can never repay you."

Sir Richard muttered something that Rivière could not make out, and took out his watch.

"Yes, yes," cried Rivière, upon whom the action was not lost—"it is too late—I have detained you horribly. Let me tell you, though, again how grateful I am."

He took Lady Lawler's hand, and kissed it once more, accompanying her to the door, as she took up a chamber candlestick.

Directly after, he returned to Sir Richard, who was moodily lighting another candle, which he offered in silence to his guest, afterwards leading the way to the chamber set apart for the visitors' use.

"Good night, my dear friend," cried Rivière with effusion; and he tried to pass the candlestick over the shoulder of his host, that he might embrace him as the custom is in France; but Sir Richard eluded the touch, held out his hand à la fin of cod, touched Rivière's lightly, said "Good night," and was gone.

CHAPTER XVII.

KITCHEN GOSSIP.

"TAKE another horn of ale, Mr. Higgs, and don't spare it. There's plenty more where this came from. Jane will be down as soon as the child is a-bed."

"Thanky, sir," said Abram Higgs, slowly; and he wiped his mouth upon his sleeve before raising the foaming vessel, and he wiped his mouth upon his sleeve after he had set the horn down empty upon the servants' hall table. After this he sat and stared heavily at Mr. Sellars, Sir Richard's butler, who, ruddy, portly, and wearing the white neckclothed aspect of a bishop, refilled the visitor's horn.

"And how do you find thyatrical matters, Mr. Higgs?"

"Well, sir," said Mr. Higgs, slowly, after apparently looking inside himself to see what he should say, "take things altogether, they aint so very bad. We're closed just now for a touch at painting up and getting a new casting, and then we opens with a fresh piece."

"Tragedy or comedy, Mr. Higgs?" said the butler.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Higgs, "if I was to say as it was tragedy, I shouldn't be telling the truth; and if I was to say comedy, I shouldn't be telling what's right, for it aint neither one nor the other. It's one o' them fashionable sorter pieces that's all the go now, where it seems as if they'd taken a serus and a comic piece, and cut 'em up, and fitted 'em together to make one."

"Ah, to be sure," said Mr. Sellars. "Take another horn of ale, Mr. Higgs. There's plenty more where that came from."

"Thank you, sir—you're very kind," said Higgs; and he took another horn, pouring it very slowly down his throat, as if sending it to keep the former horn company.

"Anything very spectarcular in the piece, Mr. Higgs?" said the butler, with the air of a connoisseur.

"Well, yes, sir, there's a few novelties. You see, people likes a little of the real in the things nowadays on the stage—fires, and engines, and railway trains, and real horses; so our manager has gone in for it very strong this time."

"Has he, though?" said the butler.

"Oh, yes, very," said Higgs, glancing at the door, as if expectant of a fresh face upon the scene; "oh, yes, sir, we do things well our way. We're to have a real flock of sheep driven across the stage in the prologue—that's done along of one of the New Cattle Market salesmen. Then we've a boy run over by a real 'bus, loaded with passengers, in the first act; a cab-stand all real, with a waterman and his pails, and a post with real water laid on, and all the horses with nosebags a-tossing their heads and shying the chaff about in the second act, with swells coming out of the clubs and hiring their Hansoms."

"That ought to bring the house down, Mr. Higgs," said the butler, approvingly; "but I don't know what Shakspeare would have said to such an innovation."

"Why, you see, Mr. Sellars, sir," continued Higgs, "the drammer was in its hinfancy in Shakspeare's time, and the stage carpenter's profession hadn't arrived at such a climax, as you may say."

"Exactly," said the butler, nodding. "But about your new piece—what have you got next?"

"Well, I don't know as I ought to tell you, sir," said Higgs, slowly; "but, seeing

as we are all amongst friends, and you won't let it go any further, sir, I don't mind telling you that we've got a triumph, and the way I'm getting it ready for that third act will be a startler. There's never been nothing like it attempted before, and it'll be grand, sir."

"Ah, you may depend upon me, Mr. Higgs," said the butler, solemnly, as if he were being trusted with a State secret.

"Well, sir, the scene's to be Ludgate-hill by night, with St. Paul's at the back, and you looking up the hill, with the street up, and the navvies all busy taking up the pipes, with the gas flaring to light it up all lurid. Then in comes the heroine, and says—

"Thus far have I fled, and still he is upon my tract. I'll flee me here."

"Then she flees herself there, and the navvies look up at her. Enter the villain, and he says, coming forward—

"I've tracked her here, and now my revenge is nigh. Aha! behold my prey!"

"Then he makes a run along the piled-up earth, where the men are at work, and the navvies shout to him as it aint safe; when he cries 'Aha! 'tis safe for me!' and then he makes a jump to get at the heroine, when she shrieks, and the villain slips, the earth caves in, and he's buried alive."

"Brayvo!" said Mr. Sellars, clapping his hands softly.

"But that aint all, sir," said Mr. Higgs. "There's the eppylog, which is as good as another act, you know; and in that we have a real coroner's inquest in the back of the stage, and the principal characters as witnesses; when the villain, who was dug out, proves to have the lost will in his pocket, and the hero gets his rights, and they're married. Curtain."

"Rather sensational, Mr. Higgs."

"Well, yes, sir, a little so; but law, you see, the public likes it laid on thick. It's my opinion as that piece will take."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Mr. Sellars. "Nice opportunity for obliging a friend or two, Mr. Higgs. By the way, what a very superior young woman Jane is."

"Yes, sir—very," said Mr. Higgs, gruffly.

"Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!" laughed the butler, poking his visitor in the ribs; "but there, you needn't think that of me, Mr. Higgs. I'm too old now to think of cutting you out. Fifty-five now, Mr. Higgs—fifty-five."

"Are you really, though, sir?" said the visitor.

"Yes, Mr. Higgs," said the butler, with dignity—"I'm fifty-five, and I look down upon the female servants here with a father's eye. Sir Richard and my lady wishes it."

"Do they, though?" said Higgs.

"Yes," said the butler; "and as I was a-saying, Jane's a very superior young woman, and I'm glad to find that she looks a little higher than livery servants. A young woman in a large establishment like this, Mr. Higgs, has many temptations to change her condition; but though a footman in a good uniform is very well to look at, very few ever rises to my position in life; and for a young woman to let herself down to marrying a footman is to settle herself into a life with a washtub to work at, and a looking-glass to see herself starve."

"And no money to buy soap," said Higgs, slowly.

"Just so—and no money to buy soap," said Mr. Sellars, acquiescing. "But I'm glad to find our Jane has more sense. By the way, Mr. Higgs, you don't seem to like that there ale. What do you say to a glass of wine?"

"Thanky, sir—no," replied Higgs, helping himself to another horn; "this'll do very nistely. I wish we had such a tap behind the scenes. We often do have tubs and bottles and such things about the stage; but they're always dummies—hollow as the big drum in the orchestra."

"By the way, Mr. Higgs, I suppose—that is, you do sometimes come across orders for your house?"

"Yes, sir," said Higgs, grinning slowly all across his face, "we often come across 'em, but not often to keep."

"Dear me!" said the butler, in a disappointed tone of voice—"I should have thought you could always have managed to get a party in."

"I don't know nothing about always, Mr. Sellars, sir," said Higgs; "but if you and a friend likes at any time to name a night, and send me word by Jane, I dare say I can work that much for you. But here she is."

In effect, Jane—head nurse—had deputed the care of her charge to Mary, her second in command, and now responded to the summons she had received respecting the arrival of Mr. Higgs.

Jane smoothed down her apron, shook hands quietly with her visitor, and then stood and stared hard at the butler, as if to

ask him why he did not go. His response, however, was a calm, patronizing nod.

"Don't mind me, Jane," he said, condescendingly.

"Which I don't a bit, Mr. Sellars," said Jane, fishing out a handkerchief, and blowing her nose defiantly, as if it were a war-trump announcing a charge—"only," she continued, "if you're going to stay here, I'm a-going to take my friend into the house-keeper's room, where I aint no business and you have."

"I'm a-going directly, Jane," said the butler, mildly. "I only came to see that your friend had a horn or two of ale."

"Thank you," said Jane, shortly.

"For when we do have professional gentlemen here, I don't like them to go away and say that Sir Richard's house is a mean one."

"Oh!" said Jane, somewhat mollified, but still acidly, "I'm very much obliged, I'm sure."

"Any news upstairs, Jane?" said the butler.

"Nothing pertickler," said Jane.

"Haven't heard when they're going?"

"No, not a word," said Jane. "Her ladyship's been making the Frenchwoman, though, as fine as a she peacock with some of her dresses."

"Phew—w—w—w!" whistled the butler; "I thought there was something."

"Why?" said Jane, snappishly.

"Because Mrs. Timson's been as short as short all day," said the butler.

"Mrs. Timson always is short," said Jane, with a snort like a challenge. "On the strength of being her ladyship's maid, she makes herself just twice as big as her ladyship."

"Well, yes," said the butler, nodding at Higgs, who sat listening and paying attention to his ale—"Mrs. T. can be a little uppish."

"And enough to make her," said Jane, veering round, as if out of opposition; "look how she's put upon. Not content with giving a lot of good things to a strange Frenchwoman as comes into the house after everybody has gone to bed, and without a decent thing to her back, here's her ladyship's own maid set to alter her ladyship's own dresses. But I don't believe as Sir Richard likes it a bit."

"But then, my dear," said the butler, smiling, "it don't matter what a married man likes, he don't get it—it's what his wife

likes that rules the day. Ah, Mr. Higgs, I'd keep single, if I was you. But don't you think Sir Richard likes it, Jane?"

"No—not a bit," was the sharp reply from Jane, whose tongue, once well set going upon an entertaining bit of gossip, did not seem disposed to stop. "I've seen Sir Richard look as cross as cross at her ladyship, and she's snubbed him for it awful. But there, you may trust her ladyship for keeping a husband in his right place."

"That's all very well," said the butler, winking at Mr. Higgs, who sat stolid as one of his own freshly stippled scenes; "but if I was a married man—"

"Which you never will be," said Jane.

"I don't know so much about that," said the butler. "But as I was a-saying, if I was a married man, I shouldn't like a seedy-looking Frenchman, as looks like a little dancing-master, to be always hanging about the house, and kissing my wife's hand, she seeming to like it all the time—what do you say, Mr. Higgs?"

Mr. Higgs said nothing, but in a very expressive display of pantomime, he turned up the sleeves of his coat, and moistened the palms of his hands, before clenching his fists and squaring à la Sayers at some seedy-looking Frenchman or Frenchmen unknown.

"Exactly so," said the butler, nodding approval. But Jane was irritated.

"I should be greatly obliged, Mr. Higgs," she said, "if you wouldn't bring that nasty, low, vulgar theayter with you when you come to Grosvenor-square."

Mr. Higgs rolled down his cuffs, subsided, sighed, and glanced at his empty horn.

"Is the little Frenchman good-looking?" said Jane.

"Middling," said Mr. Sellars. "Furren and very thin."

"But you never see nothing of that sort, do you, Mr. Sellars?" said Jane, in a subdued voice, the bit of scandal possessing for her most intense interest.

"What, him a kissing her hand?" said the butler. "Well, I don't say as I have, and I don't say as I haven't. But what I do say is that these Frenchies seem as if they meant to stay; and Sir Richard don't like it, and her ladyship does."

"And if she does, she'll have her way, mark my words if she don't," said Jane, decidedly.

"You may trust her for that," said the butler.

"But I'll tell you one thing," said Jane.

"Well, what?" said the butler.

"That little Frenchwoman—"

"Well—what about her?"

"She don't like her ladyship a bit. She's smooth and pleasant, and when she comes up into the nussery she kisses the child nicely enough; but they're at daggers drawn—her and my ladyship—I can tell you, civil and smiling as they are to one another in their stupid French as no one but themselves can understand."

"But what should they be at daggers drawn for?" said Mr. Sellars.

"What are women generally at daggers drawn for, eh?" said Jane, with her eyes twinkling brightly. "Don't ask me if you don't know. But you mark my words, Mr. Sellars, see if all this don't make unpleasantry in the time to come, and trouble for everybody—that's all I've got to say."

At this juncture, Mr. James thrust his head into the hall to summon the butler to a bell that required answering—tarrying behind, though, for a moment or two, to look from Jane to Mr. Higgs, and back again; after which he sighed, and scowled, and disappeared, to shake his head at the closed door.

The moment they were relieved of the others' presence Mr. Abram Higgs's face slowly relaxed, until a broad grin overspread it, and from his behaviour he seemed to be suing in a cumbersome way for a chaste salute. Sued for or not, there was something which strongly resembled a snappish refusal, and Abram sighed deeply, but consoled himself by pouring half a horn of ale down his throat.

"Do you always mean to drink ale like that?" said Jane.

"No," said Higgs, slowly and thoughtfully, as if the question took some consideration. "No, my dear, I don't think I do—unless," he added cheerfully, "some one sees that I have a fair supply always ready, free gratis for nothing. But I say, Jane, now we are alone, when's it to be?"

"When's what to be?" said Jane, with asperity; for she belonged to that class of maidens who always deem it their duty to snap, snap, and fire at their intended throughout the long days of his probation.

"Why, the day—when's it to be?"

"Oh, stuff and nonsense!" cried Jane—"there's plenty of time to talk about that."

"No there aint, Jane," said Abram, remonstrant.

"Oh, yes, there is," said Jane. "I'm not going to leave a good place, if I know it, for nothing."

"But you wouldn't be leaving a good place for nothing, Jane," said Abram Higgs, mildly.

"Oh, yes, but I should; and I don't want to be married yet, and won't, so I tell you. And, besides, how could I leave that poor dear child?"

"I should have thought you'd have cared more for me than for other folks' children," said Abram, humbly.

"Then I don't, then—so there now," said Jane. "Likely thing, indeed! I am not going to leave here, so long as they're kind and right to me; so you needn't ask me. If ever there's a bother, perhaps I may; but while I can save a little money, I'd best stop where I am."

"No, you hadn't, Jane," said her suitor, stoutly. "I've saved a nice bit now, and we can furnish two rooms decent; and you can do work for the theayter as may bring in ten shillings a week, clean clear money; and that and my five and twenty won't be nothing to sneeze at."

"Who's going to sneeze at it?" said Jane, tartly. "But it's of no use for you to come bothering me about such stuff, because I'm not going to listen to it."

Abram Higgs sighed.

"I s'pose I may come of an evening, when I can get away?" he said.

"That's just as you like, Mr. Higgs," said Jane, frigidly.

Abram Higgs sighed once more, and seemed to think it advisable to change the subject; so he asked her how the little boy was.

"Nistely," said Jane, "only he gets to be such a limb."

"Don't matter as he's to be a barrynet, like his father," said Abram; "but temper's ruination to a pore man. Keeps him out o' place. Grows, I s'pose?"

"A-growing into a little angel as fast as ever he can," said Jane, eagerly.

"Ah, I don't wonder at that," said Higgs.

"Why?" said Jane.

"'Cause he has such a nurse!"

Jane looked at him sharply, to see whether the remark was made in a bantering spirit, or was a real compliment, and finding her

visitor's stolid face free from a wrinkle that could be interpreted into a smile, she took it to be genuine.

"Ah!" she said, "some children need have good nurses, for it isn't much notice as their mas takes of them—what with their evening parties and conversations, and flower shows and operas. As for her ladyship, she seems to forget as she's got a child at all. But it'll come home to her some day, mark my words if it don't."

Abram Higgs shook his head as he gazed in silent admiration at the lady of his heart, whom he evidently looked upon as a prophetess in her peculiar line of life; and he hinted softly that he shouldn't like to be Lady Lawler. Then he set to wondering what particular evil would befall the lady.

At last, after softening a very little, Jane announced that she could stay no longer, and at the same moment was summoned by the under-nursemaid to come and speak to Master Clive.

A quick farewell ensued, and Abram sighed as he saw the departure of his sylph.

Turning round to go himself, he was brought up short by the apparition of Mr. James, who confronted him with—

"Here, you sir, I want to have a few words with you!"

ON ESCORT.

AN INDIAN RECOLLECTION.

"ON escort!" The words may bring to the recollection of the reader many a different scene: a detachment of Hussars attending a Royal lady to the Paddington Station; Life Guards glistening and clanking round our Princess on her way to the opera; some Australian police looking after waggons with gold from the interior; some nondescript individuals, with rifle and revolver, pretending to watch the mail on its passage from Denver to San Francisco; or a large force of military occupying an Irish borough, and, amid a shower of stones, enabling the proud voter to exercise his franchise in support of his favourite candidate. The business of the present paper is, however, with none of the above, but with the escort of the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, K.T., Viceroy and Governor-General of India, on his march from Agra to Umballa, in the early part of 1863.

Agreeably to orders received from headquarters, my regiment marched to Agra, to

await the arrival of the Viceroy; and for a fortnight there was nothing but preparation to receive him. No one who has not seen it, can form an idea of the canvas city which sprang up on the great open plain: the main street composed of the tents for the staff on each side, and, at the end, the enormous durbar tent, on either side of which were the Viceroy's private apartments. There were two sets, so to speak, of all these tents; so that when he left one station in the morning, he found another camp ready pitched at the next. To the right and left were the camps of the escort, which on this occasion consisted of the body guard, a squadron of the 8th Hussars, a battery of Royal Horse Artillery, 3rd Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, 10th Bengal Cavalry, and 41st Native Infantry. As to beasts of burden, there were something like two hundred elephants and two thousand camels. Twelve native princes had arrived to pay their respects to the Lord Sahib, and they were encamped in various places all round Agra. As almost all of them fired salutes on almost every occasion and had all sorts of music (save the mark!), the row was something awful. However, when Colonel Seymour Blane, the military secretary, arrived, and hoisted the royal standard, all private salutes were put a stop to. At this time, a sad accident occurred. A captain in the 23rd Fusiliers went out in a buggy, with his wife, to make some calls, and they had only just started when the horse shied at an elephant, and the officer was thrown out, and killed on the spot.

On the 12th of February, the Fusiliers, Hussars, Horse Artillery, and Bengal Cavalry marched down to the bridge over the Jumna, near the railway station, while the Rifle Brigade lined the main street of the camp. The Viceroy arrived about four p.m., under a royal salute from the guns in the fort, and rode to his camp, accompanied by a vast concourse of natives. In the evening, the theatrical company of the Rifle Brigade gave an entertainment at the Metcalfe Hall, and fully sustained the high reputation they had acquired. Next day, Lord Elgin held a levée, at which all the officers and civilians were presented. On the 14th, he gave private audiences to nine native princes, three of whom were received with presented arms by a guard of honour of the Rifle Brigade, stationed at the entrance of the tent. These three were the Maha-

rajahs of Jeypore and Gwalior, and the Begum of Bhopal. Two others were received with shouldered arms, after which the guard was marched away.

Scindia (Gwalior) was in a bad temper about something, and came on an elephant destitute of any ornament; but Jeypore and Bhopal had their animals quite covered with "barbaric pearl and gold." The howdahs were of solid silver, with gold mountings; and the trappings were of cloth of gold, and covered with jewels. I thought the Begum had, for a lady, a rather curious dress—tight crimson trousers, purple gloves, and an upper garment of the stiffest gold brocade.

On the 17th, the Viceroy held a grand durbar. One side of the tent was crowded with natives, more or less bejewelled; and opposite them were the English, military and civil, in full dress, which, for the latter, seemed to be a black tail coat and white trousers. The Viceroy made a remarkably good speech in English; but I fear it could not have had much effect on the natives, as it was slowly repeated for their edification by one of the staff, in the most inveterate dog-Hindustani. Every native was then presented, and gave his nuzzurs, or offerings, of different value. Then the Viceroy's presents were brought in, and the durbar came to a close, having lasted four hours. It was worth seeing, but very hot.

In the evening, the Taj Mahal was illuminated, both inside and out, and two bands played in the gardens. This lighting up of the Taj has a disappointing and meretricious effect, very different to that produced on a moonlight night, when all its lovely proportions come out, and impress the spectator with feelings of real admiration. The Jumna, which runs beneath the Taj, presented a very pretty appearance, being covered with small earthenware vessels, each bearing a light. The building was lighted on the outside from two neighbouring gateways; while, below and inside, the tombs of Shah Jehan and his Empress were covered with blue lights—the smell and smoke from which soon made the visitors beat a hasty retreat. On the 18th, the Viceroy returned the Rajahs' visits, which kept him busy from ten to five, being escorted by half a battery of Artillery and a troop of Hussars. As there were twelve Rajahs, and a royal salute was fired on his arrival and departure from each, an amount

of powder was expended which, could they have heard of it, would have sent some of our very economizing M.P.'s into fits. In the afternoon, the 15th Bengal Cavalry exhibited their different feats of tent-pegging, lime-slicing, &c. This was one of the most practical-looking irregular cavalry regiments I have seen, although individually the men were very wild and savage in appearance.

The next day we paraded about five a.m., and marched about twelve miles, past the tomb of Akbar, at Secundra. It was fearfully dusty, and as, about half-way, a smart shower of rain fell, enough to give us a good wetting, we arrived at the halting-place in anything but a pleasing condition. My tent was pitched in the middle of a growing crop; and I may here mention, that in consequence of the immense space our camp occupied, we could not be particular; but the natives were fully compensated for all damage. The next day we had very bad marching, and the dust was fearful, although grass had been laid down in the worst places. I noticed that everywhere the authorities had done their best to patch up the wretched tracts called roads in out of the way districts, so that the Viceroy should get along as comfortably as possible. He generally rode the whole distance, while Lady Elgin took to her carriage after going half-way on horseback. When he passed, the infantry regiments, which were marching at ease, had to close up, halt, front, open ranks, and present arms, which was a great nuisance; and the Viceroy himself said he was very sorry to give so much trouble every day; but as he received the honour as representative of the Queen, he could not dispense with it.

On the 21st, we reached Muttra, where were quartered the 21st Hussars, lately brought on the strength of the English army. We halted here for Sunday, and there was a picnic at Bindra Bund, an exceedingly holy place on the river, the principal products of which were sacred monkeys and river turtles. One or two of the richest bankers in India reside at Muttra. The country all about here was highly cultivated, and luxuriant crops were growing; to which, however, great damage was done by the antelope, herds of which were to be seen daily on the march, and many of them fell to our rifles.

On the 24th, at Chattah, I made a good bag of very fine blue rock pigeons. At this place there was a curious old fort, built by Aurungzebe, and re-decorated by Shah

Jehan. Next day, I was shooting in a most lovely jungle, when I made rather an extraordinary shot. I was walking along a sort of glade, when a whole family of pea-fowl, cock, hen, and five young ones, ran across just in front of me. I fired at a chick, but they were all very close together, and, to my great surprise, the cock and four chicks fell dead. It was very good for the next day's "pot." This "pot" was not to be despised, and was compounded as follows:—Some twelve or fifteen officers were out shooting every day, and brought in a most multifarious collection of game, venison, hares, pigeons, partridge, quail, pea fowl, and wild fowl. All these were stewed together with a good amount of stock, and produced a compound, a mess of which was most acceptable after a long morning's march. The men of the Rifle Brigade were allowed to go out—at least, those who had private fowling-pieces; and on the march some of the camels appeared quite laden with the pea fowl, shining in their glossy plumage. The quantity of them killed must have been enormous. To my mind, the only way to cook them is to put them into a stew as above-mentioned, or make them into mulligatawny soup.

On the 26th, some natives brought in a hyæna which they had caught, and a hunt was arranged for the evening. Accordingly, some twenty cavaliers were ready at the appointed time, furnished with spears, and the brute was turned out. But the whole affair was a failure: the animal would not run at all, and simply cowered down, and slunk along for a few yards, showing his teeth when pricked up with a spear. Of all the mangy-looking, dirty, cowardly brutes I have seen, commend me to the hyæna; and his voice in the middle of the night is worse than his appearance.

The heat now began to be felt very much, and it was anything but pleasant for some of us, who would not get into houses for some six weeks. On the 2nd of March, we came in sight of Delhi, and encamped on very bleak and rocky ground. The Viceroy went and encamped near the Khootab, which is a huge pillar of stone, supposed to be many hundred years old. On the 3rd, we escorted him through the city, and encamped outside the Lahore Gate, close to some bazaars, and it was consequently very dusty, and swarmed with myriads of flies. The 2nd Battalion of the Rifle Brigade were

quartered here, and lined the principal street when we passed through. There were many things well worth seeing, and the public gardens were most delightful. We played two cricket matches in them, and enjoyed it, in spite of the heat. Many of the sides of the houses were riddled with bullet holes, and the breach near the Cashmere Gate, where the English troops entered in 1857, was still unrepaired.

On the 5th, we encamped close to the Hindun, where an action was fought with the mutineers. A tomb stood here, erected by Lieutenant-Colonel Tombs, R.H.A., in memory of Lieutenant Perkins and some men of his battery, killed in May, 1857. On the next day, I dined with the Viceroy and Lady Elgin; and on the 7th, we made a formal entry into Meerut—Lord Elgin on this occasion being mounted on an elephant. The 8th Hussars and 90th Light Infantry were out to meet us; and the Viceroy afterwards held a small durbar, when all the natives of any position in the district were presented. On the 8th, a salute announced the arrival of General Sir Hugh Rose, G.C.B., K.S.I., Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in India, and a grand review of all the troops took place under his immediate command. He got a tremendous "cropper," through his horse stepping into a hole, and they both turned a complete somersault; but no damage was done, and he was up and off again immediately. At night the artillery gave a most brilliant ball in their magnificent mess-house—Meerut being then the head-quarters of the Indian artillery. On the 10th, the camp left Meerut; but I remained for the day, and rode out in the evening in a drenching rain. When I reached camp, I found that, through some mistake, my servants had not arrived, and I had no tent and no clothes. I therefore spent the night on the ground, in the tent of a friend.

The rain continued to fall so heavily that we were obliged to halt another day, to dry the tents. Near this place was the tomb of the Begum Sumroo, with a chapel belonging to it, and all the land about here was the property of the Hon. Mrs. Cecil Forester. We had some very good shooting for the next day or two, as we passed a lot of jheels, or marshy lakes, containing numbers of wild fowl; and the crops were very luxuriant, giving shelter to no end of quail.

On the 16th, we arrived at Roorkee, which lies close to the Himalayas—first, a

low ridge, then the Mussorie Hills; and behind them tower up the gigantic peaks of the Snowy Range.

Roorkee is a small, pretty station; but contains a good deal to be seen. There is the Thomason College, named after a late Lieutenant-Governor, and devoted to engineering. Officers and men from all parts form the different classes. There are also extensive Government iron foundries here; and the source of that wonderful work, the great Ganges Canal. While we were here, the Viceroy marched to Hurdwar, with two companies of the Rifle Brigade, to see the great annual fair, which is attended by some half-million of natives, some of whom have travelled hundreds of miles for the purpose. The filth and dirt of these crowds generally engender fever and cholera. The pilgrims are not allowed to enter any stations where Europeans are quartered on their homeward route, and many of them die by the roadside. The 54th Regiment was quartered here, and I went to a meet of their hounds, when we found two jackals, both of which gave fair runs.

A tiger hunt had been got up for the Viceroy at Hurdwar, and one was killed. By all accounts, the tiger was by no means the only being in danger; for there were a great many sportsmen present, and the bullets flew about in the most lively manner. On the 21st, we reached Saharunpore, after a march along a delightful piece of road, with an avenue of peepul trees nearly all the way. Here is one of largest stud depôts in the Bengal Presidency. The little farms, with their hay and straw stacks, gave it a homely appearance. I was encamped in a grove of mango trees, and an immense number of natives came to see us march in. Here are also the Government Botanic Gardens, and many welcome flowers were in full blossom. Here and there, violets and primroses brought back visions of our dear, distant home, and the green lanes and woods of England.

The rest of our march to Umballa was very monotonous—a pleasant country and a very hot sun. As I was not well, I obtained leave to go on in a carriage for the last march; but on the road we found our Deputy Quartermaster-General lying senseless on the road, with a broken collar bone. I had therefore to give up the conveyance in which I was travelling to the D.Q.M.G., and ride his horse through the noonday

sun. I did not therefore derive much benefit by my move. The Viceroy held another durbar at Umballa. I was on the guard of honour; and, what between a sharp attack of neuralgia and the disagreeable weather, I had anything but a pleasant time of it. The sun was exceedingly hot, while the wind blew up clouds of dust. On the 30th, the Commander-in-Chief inspected the Rifle Brigade, and read a very complimentary letter from the Viceroy as to the way in which they had performed their escort duties.

The camp was now broken up, and the different regiments marched off to their respective destinations; and, indeed, it was time, for the hot weather had fairly set in, and some of the troops had a long distance to march. My regiment did not get into quarters until the 17th of April, and then some lucky individuals immediately started on long leave, to enjoy for six months the bracing air of Cashmere or of the hill stations.

SIL DONNAGHAN THE PIPER.

CHAPTER III.

AN EVENING GATHERING AT WINDY GAP.

IF Sil had had a goodly number of visitors when he first took up his quarters at Windy Gap, he had ten times more after his marriage with Miss Flaherty. In fact, the little kitchen became a recognized evening lounge for any who liked listening to the bagpipes, and gathering up the latest news. It so happened that a great topic of interest suddenly came on the cards. One of the large landed proprietors in the neighbourhood, Colonel Bennett by name, thought fit to take some of his ground into his own hands; and to bring this about, he forcibly turned out about fifteen families who occupied a row of miserable cabins near his house. A small sum was given to each; some emigrated, some moved to other parts of the country; but the murmurs excited by this proceeding were not loud, but deep. These people had lived on in the same spot for years; they had paid a few shillings yearly rent, and they looked upon themselves as fixtures. It seemed like rooting up the old elm trees that grew by the side of Knockcrea, to root them up from the soil that they were wedded to. Colonel Bennett, never a favourite, was now called the

greatest tyrant and monster that ever breathed the breath of life. Before mass, and after mass, at the shebeen shops, at the blacksmith's forge, all that he had done was brought against him, and the little group of amateur politicians assembled round Sil and his pipes at the Windy Gap were not behindhand in uttering their opinions.

One Wednesday evening there was a full gathering. There were six in all. First and foremost, there was Denis Dregan, the orator of the party, popularly called Crooked Dinny. He was a tall, pale-faced man, a glover by trade; he had received some smattering of education, and adorned his conversation with sundry scraps of history and rhetorical flights, put in, as Mrs. Camp would say, "quite promiscuous." Denis had no difficulty in choosing between a word of one syllable and a word of four; and if he did not understand the "big fellow," it made not the smallest difference to him, in it must go. Pipe in hand, he now sat nearest to Sil, and next to the fire.

On the opposite side was Andy, his younger brother, who looked up to Denis with the same awe and reverence that a devout Catholic would give to his favourite saint. Then there was Martin Brennan, a dark, sinewy, broad-chested young fellow, with his two brothers, Pat and Bill. These latter were mere novices, who only joined now and then in the conversation, and listened with approving nods, or bursts of assent.

But one of the most noteworthy of the party was Mick Flaherty, who sat opposite to Denis Dregan, and next to the other side of the fireplace. He was third cousin to Miss Flaherty, but had taken little notice of the solitary spinster till the arrival of the more attractive Sil. Mick was a small farmer, and had received a good education at the national school. He was a dark, thickset young man; his teeth were intensely white, and his hair and eyes intensely black; altogether, there was an intensity about his whole face that drew attention to him. One saw that whatever he felt, he must feel strongly: there was a concentration about him that was truly Celtic. Now, his low brow was contracted and his eyes were flashing with an angry light, as Colonel Bennett's name flew from lip to lip.

"Curse his sowl," he muttered, in a half-whisper.

"Don't curse, Mick," expostulated Mrs.

Donnaghan, late Miss Flaherty, as she rocked herself backwards and forwards. "Lave cursin' alone, or the prayers may fall upon the pracher."

"How could they?" cried Mick, fiercely. "Have I turned out the helpless and poor, because I wanted a bigger playground for meself? Have I driven childer and cripples into the could, and the frost, and the bitter snow? Have I?"

"In coorse you haven't," interrupted Denis Dregan, taking his pipe from his mouth. "The guilt be on them that does. What's a man without his home, boys? Isn't his home iverything to him, and whin that's gōne, where is he? Isn't it as bad as murder to take it from him? And if it was only men that was drove out, they're able to support themselves, and keep life in them some way; but faymales, boys—young, tindher faymales—for thim to be left widout a roof over their head, and forced to sin and shame to keep the bread in their mouths—what's bad enough for the man that does it? What is it he should git?"

"A bullet through his head," muttered Mick Flaherty, from his corner.

"No—but two!" cried Andy Dregan.

"Faix, I think one 'ud do the business," said Mick, with a laugh.

"Mick thinks bad of losing purty Rose Mulloy," said Martin Brennan.

"She's one of thim that was turned out by Bennett's men. She wouldn't listen to Mick; and now he thinks she'll get another bachelor where she's gone."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SHAUBHAILE CROSS-ROADS.

IT was past nine o'clock on an August evening, and Sil Donnaghan was slowly making his way home to the Windy Gap. He was rather later than usual. The weather was warm and mild, and picnic parties often visited Knockcrea; so that, what with dancing and frolicing, he was kept playing long after the sun had gone down. Now, he turned out of the little mountain path into the road. The mountain made a sharp descent, and formed a bog or moor, which sloped down still further into a glen known by the name of the Glen of the Lonely Spirit. The ground then made a sudden rise, and it was here, on the off-side of the mountain, that three roads met. East, south, and north they went—that to the east led to

Colonel Bennett's place, that to the south to a little country town not far from Wicklow, and that to the north was the old coach road to Dublin.

Sil came to these cross-roads with a slow, hesitating step. His pipes were heavy, and he had had a long, fagging day. Those three roads marked a stage in his journey. When he had passed them, he could say that he had only one mile more to go, and then he would be at home. He was always glad to pass this turning point, too, because there were many rumours afloat about the place. It was decidedly uncanny. A suicide had once been buried there; and as for the Glen of the Lonely Spirit close by, it was a famous haunted spot, and had been so for generations. Sil was not above a firm belief in the supernatural; and at the sound of approaching wheels, he was as much relieved as a child shut up in a dark room would be when he heard a friendly voice outside.

The horse was trotting on, surely, regularly, steadily. Now it went more slowly, up a little incline; now its pace quickened, as it rattled rapidly down. It was coming nearer. Click! click! click!—how sharp the hoofs sounded in the quiet evening air, and how smoothly the wheels went! Now they came to a patch of stones, and grated over them with a spurt and a dash. Now one of the horse's shoes seemed loose, or perhaps a stone had got into it. On again, less rapidly than before. The cross roads were nearly reached, and Sil now saw that it was Colonel Bennett's gig, drawn by his stone-grey horse, that was coming towards him. There were two figures in the front seat—one with a low felt hat, and a great coat drawn up to his ears; the other, the coachman, in a drab livery.

The crescent moon had gone behind a cloud, only a few stars glinted out, the wind softly sighed through the poplar trees, and a heron rose from the field, with its quick, shrill cry. Sil stood aside to let the gig pass, and, quick as lightning, a shot whizzed past him—another, another, and another: the figure in the gig gave a sharp cry, and fell back with a groan. Sil gave a frightened glance towards the hedge; he strained his one eye, half dreading, half expecting to see something behind it. He did: like a flash, like a vision seen through a chink in a wall, the intense black eyes and compressed ferocity of Mick Flaherty's face started for a second before him; and then a short thick-

set figure wound through the poplars, and was gone. Sil collected his scattered wits, and went forward to the gig, which had now come to a standstill.

"Is yer honour kilt entirely?" asked the piper.

The owner of the felt hat and white great coat, who had been lying back, supported by his servant's arm, now feebly raised his head.

"Drive on, Pat—drive on, you fool, you blockhead!" he cried. "What do you mean by stopping here, and letting me be finished outright—finished more than I am already, by these cursed scoundrels?"

"It's only Sil Donnaghan, the piper, your honour; sure he's a dark (blind) man, and was walking quietly along the road."

"Don't talk your nonsense to me," was the answer. "He's an accomplice of the fellow that fired, I'll be bound, and knows all about their rascally plots; but I'll be even with him yet, if I get over this bout. Drive on, I say, you simpleton, or I shall bleed to death. Good heavens, to think I should be shot like a dog at my own gate!"

Before Colonel Bennett had finished these last words, Pat Dooling had taken up the reins, and was turning down to Bennett Park; while Sil, sorely tossed about in mind, proceeded to Windy Gap. He could hardly eat anything of the roasted potatoes and dripping which Gretta had provided for his supper; and all the night he tossed from side to side with mutters of—

"Millia murder! Was it him I seen? Did I see him at all, at all; or was it only a make-believe? The bloodhounds 'll be after him, and have his life; and sure, what can we do?"

Then again he would start up and cry—

"He's over the counthry, across the bog, down by the glin, up the mountain side, away wid him. Sure, it's Bennett that ud flay the life out ov him if he cotched him. Oh! but he's the rash, misfortunate cratur."

Gretta, who had heard something of the night's adventures, waxed more and more wrathful against her kinsman.

"Weary on him!" she cried, "and weary on crooked Dinny Dregan, wid all his fine talk. But Mick was iver a restless, scatter-brained boy. He always shook a loose leg; and now he'll bring throuble on all ov us, see if he won't."

AN INCIDENT OF THE COMMUNE.

"JUST one line, dear Charles, to let you know we are both alive and well. Yours ever, in love, ——" was the welcome epistle I received one morning, in March, 1873, addressed from Paris unsealed, in compliance with the rule of the then German Army of Occupation. A pleasant missive it looked, half-hidden under the plate that contained a fresh egg, occupying the place of honour upon my breakfast table; and it emanated from my French brother-in-law, who, as well as my sister, had been imprisoned within the walls of that city during the whole period of the siege and subsequent bombardment. Their advent in the flesh shortly followed. Dolph was particularly wrathful. From a bright, careless Parisian, he had become a very Hannibal; his conversation was tinged blood-red, and many were the vows of vengeance muttered by him, even in his most amiable moods.

He certainly appeared to have suffered. He informed me that he had disclaimed the "Garde Nationale," and had insisted upon enrolment in the ranks of the Mobile. He had received a bullet in the leg; been half-frozen to death; and, worse than all, his black hair had turned grey. Whilst incapacitated by his wound this great misfortune had come upon him. Many were the terrible accounts I received from him of that bombardment; how he had lain in his bed shivering with terror at the unceasing boom of the cannon, which had continued morning and night, without intermission; how the whole square had been startled from their unquiet beds, on one memorable occasion, when a shell reached the Place de la Concorde and then exploded, spreading terror amongst the crowd, who could only explain the proximity of the explosion by the assumption of the fact that the Germans were inside the city.

"Charlie," continued he, with a scintillation only to be compared to cold blue steel in his otherwise mild eye—"during the whole of the siege I never saw one German—jamaïs!—and lived on nothing but carrots."

I condoled with him upon this couple of misfortunes, and particularly upon his not having had the opportunity of grasping the enemy of his country by the throat; and ultimately we settled the point as to the probable result of such an encounter to our

mutual satisfaction. As to the carrots, it appears he had taken the precaution to lay in a large quantity of this succulent vegetable when the orders were issued to the inhabitants of the city to provide for those contingencies that all the world knows happened. He was eloquent in the narration of his sufferings in the "tail," as he termed it, at the butcher's shop; how he had waited from three o'clock in the early morning, and bitter cold, till noon, for the miserable dole of flesh distributed; how he hated the butcher for never giving him fat; and how he ultimately ingratiated himself into that same butcher's good graces. The butcher's eye one morning not being so true as was its wont, directed the stroke of his cleaver upon the thumb adorning his left hand, which stroke nearly severed it; and had it not been for the prompt assistance rendered him by Dolph, undoubtedly his hand would have been permanently crippled.

However, after a short stay in London, and the experiencing of some of the kindly feeling and sympathy that is the peculiar attribute of the contemporary Briton—notwithstanding he has such a blot upon his national history that at one period of it it required an Imperial proclamation to ensure his abstinence from "strife and contention, either by outward deeds, taunting words, unseemly countenance, by mimicking them," whenever the sight of a foreigner offended him—Dolph rapidly recovered his spirits; and finally it was settled that we should return in company to Paris, I myself being rather curious to note the aspect of the city under the Commune, which had then been proclaimed, and which he never ceased to anathematize from the moment we stepped into a second-class carriage at London Bridge until we arrived at Dieppe, whereafter I am bound to say he exhibited much discretion. However strong were his opinions upon the existing state of things, he did not express them.

Trouble awaited us upon our arrival at Paris. The house had been left in charge of an Englishman (Dolph likes Englishmen), who, poor fellow, was possessed of but one lower limb; his deficiency in that respect, however, being amply supplied by a fair modicum of the possession denominated "British pluck." He was full of news: the capital had been summoned to surrender by the Versailles troops, who were even then concentrating outside the principal entrances

to the city; and but an hour previously an officer of the Commune had been levying, en masse, the male population for the purpose of resistance, and had expressed himself but indifferently satisfied as to the truth of the statement that the owner of the house was in London; and, upon leaving, had intimated his intention of paying another visit.

Upon hearing this, Dolph dropped into a chair, and for a moment seemed overcome. Then he broke out—

"I fight for the Commune—I!"

Then he burst into satirical laughter, and finished with a shower of epithets that, in the abstract, were decidedly uncomplimentary to the Commune, personally and collectively.

His plans were shortly matured. He would depart immediately from Paris, if it were not too late. He had some slight refreshment and then took his departure; it being understood that I should remain—he making his way to Liège, where the taint of the Commune had not appeared.

He had scarcely made good his retreat when the officer before-mentioned returned, and in peremptory tones demanded who I was, and whether I was the inhabitant. I explained that I had but just arrived in Paris, and handed him a Foreign Office passport, brand-new, and bearing the signature "Granville," which he glanced over, thrust back, without abating one jot of his insolence of manner, and joined his companions in the street, who were unpleasantly noisy.

At one corner of the Rue Royale is a large perfumer's shop, which became distinguished by the bullet indentations on its façade; and it was about this spot that occurred one of the many notable encounters between the Versailles and Communistic troops, upon the occasion of the assault upon the city by the former. It was upon the ground floor of the next house but one to this that my interview with the Communists took place. It was used for a shop. I noticed the windows were secured by shutters of iron, and there was a mode of egress from the back of the shop to the little court in the rear. When the Communist officer retired, I and my one-legged friend attempted to regain the street, but to our surprise we discovered it was guarded by a person in semi-uniform, who peremptorily ordered us back into the shop, which command we had no alternative but to obey. By this time it

must have been one hour before midnight, and bitterly cold. Confused shouts, the hurrying to and fro of large bodies of men, shuffling of rapid feet, the whole accompanied by much clashing and clanking, proclaimed to our listening ears that something of importance was proceeding. Presently, the whole of the various sounds seemed to leave our immediate neighbourhood, and concentrate upon the Boulevard. We then heard sounds of firing, heavy and irregular, in the direction of the Rue Royale; then the comparative quietness of the street was broken, and also the door of the shop wherein we were shivering with mingled cold and—I am sorry to admit—fear, and the place quickly filled with an excited group of men, who commenced tearing down the fixtures, and seizing everything in the shape of furniture, bundling it out into the street: the formation of a barricade being the object of this Vandalism. The firing now was general, and unpleasantly near, and our alarm became intense.

“Had the Versailles troops attacked the city?”

“Yes; and all who do not intend to fight had better make themselves scarce,” said my one-legged friend, hobbling to the passage leading to the cellars—a proceeding I imitated with alacrity.

We reached the court and then the cellar in safety, where we found congregated the inhabitants of the house who had not been able to take flight. It is well known that the Government troops entered the city at the Place de la Concorde, and that a barricade was at once constructed by the Communists to stop their progress. The severity of the conflict at this point cannot be better evidenced than by the appearance of the fronts of the houses, bespattered as they were by the bullets of the contending forces. We could hear the fray distinctly from our position in the cellars, and ever and anon we made peregrinations to our former position in the shop, impelled by an irresistible curiosity we could not overcome—the fray increasing in intensity at each successive visit; our return being anxiously awaited by the other inmates, amongst whom we were the only representatives of the male sex. On my return from one visit of this nature, as I reached the court, I could hear the sound of heavy blows on the gateway that faced the street, and had barely time to reach the haven of the cellar, when the door

was forced, and the forecourt filled with soldiers. I heard the demand, “Anybody in this house?” then a rapid order, which was followed by the rattle of the discharge from half a dozen Chassepôts, fired up the staircase.

At this point I emerged from the cellars, as a kind of ambassador from the inmates, just as a party was being told off to search them; and great was my relief to find that the city was in the hands of the Versailles troops, and that for the present the tide of battle had rolled from our vicinity, although it was raging furiously in others. We were advised not to move from the house—which advice, by the way, we considered quite unnecessary—and after fully searching the premises, the military departed, leaving a solitary sentinel outside. My one-legged friend and I returned to the shop, and spent what remained of the night in dozing and fruitless endeavours to obtain warmth, until the light twinkling between the chinks of the shutters proclaimed sunrise. There was almost total silence where before had been sounds of armed contention; and but for the periodical tramp of the sentry outside, nothing broke the impressive stillness. I sat dozing and half asleep until, unable longer to control my curiosity, I arose and carefully slipped back the inner fastenings of the door. By the gathering light I could see my companion was sleeping, with his maimed limb propped for comfort's sake on his crutch, and looked cold and weary enough. I softly pulled the door towards me, and looked out towards the Boulevard; then turning to look down the street, my gaze rested on a dead soldier, lying almost at my feet, half in the gutter and half on the sidepath, with a staring wound in his forehead; and lying near him, another, and another. I could hardly refrain from calling out, so great was the horror the sight occasioned. I turned faint and sick, and closed the door. The noise made by the action aroused my companion, and together we searched for and discovered a piece of woollen stuff, with which we covered the remains of the soldier, lying as it were on the threshold of the house. No person appeared stirring; but, as we turned to re-enter the house, I heard a shot, and looking hastily in the direction of the Boulevard, saw a solitary man, dressed in a blouse, scudding along in the direction of the Madeleine, hotly pursued by several of the Versailles troops, who fired as they went. My curiosity

to observe the sequel of this chase caused me to place my back to the shutters, and slide cautiously to the corner of the Boulevard; but I was considerably disconcerted by the apparition of the sentry, who, bringing his Chassepôt to the charge, ordered me to get within doors again; which I, nothing loth, did.

The excesses that ensued upon the subjection of the Commune are of too recent occurrence to need recapitulation. Personally, I shall always retain a lively remembrance of the capture of Paris by the Versailles troops, and its attendant horrors.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XXIII.

WE had been just a fortnight settled in Dumfernaghalee, when the Woodward's arrived, and were duly installed in the house allotted to Mr. Smith's assistant for the time being, at the opposite end of the town to where we lived.

I was much surprised by the improvement which had taken place in my friend's appearance, and congratulated him upon it; but he affected to treat the matter with indifference.

"How do you like the hole?" meaning Dumfernaghalee, was about the first question he asked me.

"Very much, indeed," I replied. "The people are very kind and attentive, and the patients not more troublesome than might be expected. I had a stiffish time, though, of it at first."

"Hum! I'll take care they don't impose upon me."

Miss Matilda—Mrs. Woodward, I mean—looked six years younger, at least, than when she was married; and her hair, instead of being smothered in bear's grease and hidden from sight under a close chenille hair-net, was loosely, not to say airily, worn in coils on the top of her head, and was of a bright chestnut colour.

"You have heard, of course," I remarked to my friend, "about your old acquaintance and new landlord?"

"No," he replied. "What do you mean?"

"Doctor Middleton. Is it possible you have not heard that he has come into all this property, and is now Sir John?"

"By Jove!" exclaimed my friend, "by Jove!"—a piece of Pagan profanity which was about the only one he then indulged in, and that but rarely—"how was I to know? You never told me, and I wasn't likely to have heard it from anybody else."

"That's true; but you might have seen it in the papers."

"I might, but I did not."

I could see that he was moved, although so reticent upon the subject; for he directly changed it, and never again reverted to the matter.

I could not help fearing, knowing him as I did, his first meeting with Miss Middleton; but trusted that his attachment to his wife had weaned him from his former idolatrous worship of that divinity.

Woodward's little son, a small but healthy little fellow, was born soon after their arrival, and immediately baptized by his father, being named George, after his uncle, who died in Australia.

The next mail from Australia brought Mr. Dobbie letters from Sir John. Lady Middleton was still in such a precarious state that their projected departure from the colony had to be indefinitely postponed; nor did subsequent accounts tell of any improvement in her ladyship's condition.

Two years passed away, during which Charles Woodward's popularity in all the country round grew exceedingly; so much so, that the vicar, Mr. Smith, now very rarely preached, but permitted his curate, except on special occasions, to occupy the pulpit both morning and evening; and Charles had preached at Moighrath and Pennyletter, and even as far as Banntown and Victoria; and had everywhere given unbounded satisfaction.

After all, he appeared to have found his true vocation. I was astonished at his eloquence and great command of language, for which I was totally unprepared.

"All my family, for generations, have had the gift of the gab," he said to me one day. "I suppose it is hereditary, and has been latent in me all these years, only waiting for an opportunity to develop itself."

"I suppose so," I assented.

"I need not ask you whether my preaching is effective," he went on; "for I can tell that myself, by contrasting the attendance in the church with what it was when I first came here, and when Smith sermonizes."

Certainly that poor old gentleman had

no particular gift, although when he did occupy the pulpit he made a point of talking for an hour—a practice which Woodward was much too worldly wise to imitate. His sermons rarely occupied more than twenty minutes in the delivery; so that, when he concluded, he left his audience disappointed that he had finished so soon, and anxious to hear him again, which was exactly what he aimed at. The vicar, on the contrary, could not be reasoned out of talking his congregation to sleep; and the consequence was that nobody would go to church when they knew he was to deliver the sermon.

Charles had one day preached before the Bishop of Highshire at Pennyletter, and was warmly congratulated by his lordship.

"I shall be a bishop myself, some day, by Jove!" he exclaimed, when recounting his triumph to me next morning.

"No need to swear about it, that I can see," I replied; whereupon my friend turned on his heel and walked out of the surgery.

As I have before observed, there was a strange affinity between us two. I could not fathom the mystery. It was no uncommon thing for the same thought to arise simultaneously in both our minds; and his ideas on many subjects were as peculiar as my own, with which they perfectly coincided, although we had never, so to speak, compared notes upon them together.

I was not myself aware how strangely similar were our views on most points, until after I had heard him preach several times; and yet there was much and serious dissimilarity between us. Nevertheless, the question was perpetually recurring to my mind, "Are we a divided entity, or two separate beings with a strong resemblance to each other?" But I never solved the difficulty. I dare say I never shall.

His popularity grew and increased amazingly, and culminated in a perfect ovation on the occasion of a sermon he preached when the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne fell on a Sunday, in the year following his arrival in the district.

For, be it known, our two parishes were vehemently, not to say violently, Protestant in all their ways, and kept all the feasts of Orangeism with great, if not exactly religious, zeal.

The Middletons, for generations, had been devoted to the same cause—as well they might, for they had received the fee

simple of their Irish estate as a reward for their adherence to William III.; but on condition of extirpating the Papistry, who had hitherto lived on or owned the land. As in duty bound, the brave General Middleton, the founder of the family, and his descendants, faithfully observed the compact, and granted leases to those only who agreed to "turn." These "land Protestants," however, as might have been expected, were but sorry disciples of the new faith; but their children, brought up in it and knowing no other, became its zealous, if not very enlightened, supporters.

Consequently, at the date of which I write, there was no mass-house—as Catholic churches are irreverently termed about Dumfernaghalee—nearer to us than Pennyletter, quite seventeen miles away; and but that a priest came over once a fortnight from that town and performed mass in a large room of the hotel, the Byrnes, Murphys, O'Reillys and Gormans, who yet lingered few and far between on the estate, would probably soon have lapsed into heresy, as their less stable brethren had already done—to their manifest worldly improvement, at all events.

It had taken generations of coercion to bring matters to such a state; and had the late Sir Stewart, or the present baronet, Sir John, been true to the traditions of his forefathers, the remarkable fact of two Irish parishes without a single Romanist inhabitant would have been undoubtedly realized.

Such a state of affairs as I have described was a subject of much congratulation to the Protestant majority, and was quietly accepted by the Catholic minority; consequently the harmony existing between the two sections of the population remained uninterrupted for a long series of years, even during the most boisterous celebration of the high festivals of the twelfth of July and the fifth of November.

This harmony, I regret to say, my friend Charles Woodward, the new curate, was the primary cause of disturbing.

It was unintentionally done, I have no doubt; but the breach, once made, gradually widened, until a complete disruption of our society was the most lamentable result, which was thus brought about.

In the July following my friend's arrival in Dumfernaghalee, the twelfth of July fell on a Sunday, and the vicar was announced to preach in the morning. Notwithstanding

this discouraging intelligence, however, the various Orange lodges marched, with all their banners and insignia, through the town, and filled the church long before the hour of divine service arrived. Mr. Smith discoursed for nearly two hours, and was listened to with respect, if not with unbounded admiration.

In the evening, however, it was far different. It was known far and wide that the curate, whose reputation was already great, would preach "a proper Orange sermon;" and the devoted adherents of the faith poured in from every quarter, some even coming from Banntown, so that the church could not accommodate one-third of those who sought admission within its walls.

Such being the case, it was proposed—by whom I know not—that at the close of the service the curate should address the assembled multitude from the porch, which, after a momentary consultation with the vicar, he consented to do. A pulpit was extemporized, and the people, grouping themselves around, prepared to listen in breathless expectation.

I noticed several Roman Catholics among the crowd, and wondered what they were doing there; but I was more especially surprised to see the priest from Pennyletter.

I am not sure that Charles saw him; but if he did, the sight only spurred him on to greater exertion.

I am not about to reproduce the sermon; it would serve no good purpose to do so, and I am still of opinion it would have been better left unpreached.

As a rule, my friend's pulpit orations—always delivered extempore, though I believe much studied at home—were, of their kind, perfect: the language was choice, but simple; the images and similes startling and novel, but patent to the most rustic intelligence; but they wanted life, reminding me of an exquisite statue, of irreproachable beauty and proportions, but inanimate and cold.

On the present occasion it was different; the preacher had evidently determined to do his best. He looked pale, but collected; like a man who had girded up his loins for the battle, resolved to conquer or to die.

Charles spoke for an hour. I never listened to such a withering, scathing, annihilating piece of passionate eloquence in my life, and trust I never shall. His every word fell on my ears like molten lead. What, then,

must its effects have been upon those whose ancestral faith he so fiercely assailed and vituperated?

On the majority of his hearers, however, the effect produced by my friend's oratory was electrical. The densely packed mass surged and heaved with varying emotions, as they eagerly drank in the torrent of burning words that fell from the preacher's lips.

At one moment I feared for the safety of Father Hanratty, whom I had seen in the crowd—so intense was the excitement produced; but happily he escaped without injury, and withdrew before the conclusion of the discourse; but it was injudicious conduct on his part to have come near the church at all.

At the close of the curate's harangue, the crowd, which must have numbered considerably over a thousand, burst into a loud and perfectly irrepressible shout of applause, which changed into a terrific shriek as the preacher, overcome by his emotions or his exertions, or both, fainted, and was carried into the vestry in a state of insensibility. Some minutes elapsed before he regained consciousness, when a most distressing scene occurred with his wife, who went into violent hysterics, a contagious complaint which spread among the excitable female portion of the crowd; so that I had quite a busy evening attending to them all.

As soon as my friend made his appearance at the door of the vestry, after his recovery from his swoon, he was forcibly seized by a number of his congregation, hoisted upon their shoulders, and borne off in triumph to his house.

The excited crowd yelled and hurrahd till they could yell no longer, and otherwise conducted themselves in a reprehensible manner; but fortunately no breach of the peace occurred.

On the whole, I must say, the demonstration was not an edifying one. It resembled much more a savage corroboree than the celebration of a Christian festival, as many of the more sober-minded spectators thought; and I felt sorry for my friend, and his flock whose passions he had aroused.

I was anxious to ascertain Mr. Dobbie's opinion of the proceedings, and their probable results; but that gentleman, with the caution habitual to persons of his nation, merely replied, "Ay, ay!" to all my remarks and inquiries, nor would he commit himself to any further or less equivocal expression

of his feelings on the subject, of whatever nature they might be.

Mr. Smith, the vicar, professed himself enchanted, saying, with a chuckle—

"Woodward's a fine fellow, and has the right metal in him."

Mrs. Woodward, I think, was thoroughly frightened—I know my Emma was; and as for the curate himself, when his excitement had subsided, I think he was rather ashamed than otherwise of the whole transaction.

For my own part, I decidedly regretted what had occurred; though far from, at the time, foreseeing all that was to grow out of it.

However, the curate's already great popularity was increased a thousandfold by his Twelfth Day's discourse; and when, some months subsequently, the reverend vicar was very suddenly taken from among us by an attack of gout in the stomach, a numerous and influential deputation of the parishioners waited on the agent, and petitioned him to appoint my friend to the vacant post.

Mr. Dobbie, who had received *carte blanche*, and—which was more to the purpose—power of attorney from Sir John to manage all his Irish affairs during his absence, at once granted their prayer; and Charles was inducted—I believe that is the word—into the vicarage, just three months before the arrival in Europe of the baronet and his daughter (for poor Lady Middleton had gone to her rest at last); and in those three months several events of much importance to all concerned took place, of which more by and by.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IT had been a very pleasant study for me, watching the gradual development of the parental instinct in my friend and his wife, which I had abundant opportunities of doing, as I was perpetually called in, by either father or mother, to pronounce upon some fancied ailment of their darling.

Of the two, I think Mrs. Woodward was more under the influence of the newly awakened feeling than her husband, and seemed to have taken a new lease of her life. From being silent and studious, poring for hours over some thrice-thumbed novel, she had grown sprightly and active, ever bustling about, humming snatches of long-forgotten nursery rhymes, or talking to the little one in that nondescript motherly language which babies are supposed to understand.

That Charles was very fond of his infant I have no doubt; but his was a shallower nature than his wife's. He was naturally of an excitable temperament, and not susceptible of deep-seated feeling.

My wife had grown very fond of Mrs. Woodward and was much with her, of which I was glad, as, I being necessarily so frequently absent from home, my darling must have been very lonely without her companionship.

The Woodward's child was a sweet, engaging little creature at the time of which I write. He was eighteen months old; and could run about, and lisp many words in a pretty infantile manner, perfectly unintelligible except to the initiated.

He had not had one hour's illness since he was born, and was as plump and healthy as any mother could desire. He was preternaturally good-tempered, too; and was seldom, if ever, heard to cry, even when undergoing the terrible ordeal of the bath—an operation nearly always performed by his mother, who was thoroughly wrapped up in her son.

If Charles had been a favourite with the people while curate, as vicar his popularity was if anything increased; and the knowledge that he had pulled down a wasp's nest about their ears served rather to tighten the bonds of affection that linked him to his parishioners, who expressed to a man—and especially to a woman—on every occasion, their entire readiness to do everything possible, or impossible, for him and his. Next to its father, I think the child had the strongest hold on the popular affection—every one seeming to take a personal interest in the pretty little fellow; so that the general consternation which seized upon all when the news of his death was spread abroad one morning may be readily imagined.

"It was impossible," every one said; and crowds besieged the vicarage, anxiously hoping that the sad intelligence might not be true.

Unfortunately it was: the closed windows but too plainly proved it to the most sceptical. Some of the villagers, nevertheless, were not satisfied, and made their way round to the back of the house, to receive from Margery M'Anvil a final confirmation of their fears.

"It's a judgment on them, honey," whined one old crone to another—"a judgment for keeping a Papist about the house,

when there's so many good Protestants in the town would be glad of the place."

The conviction that this was indeed the case by degrees forced itself upon the minds not only of those who were ignorant and superstitious, but of many who ought to have known better. After a while rumours of foul play were bandied about in whispers; but had no foundation, I still believe, save in the imagination of the propounders. It was croup, some said, the child died of; others maintained it was convulsions; really the death of the poor little thing was caused by a grape which got into the windpipe and suffocated him—no one about him having the knowledge, or the presence of mind, necessary to relieve him; whilst I, unfortunately, was miles away at the time; and, though immediately summoned by a messenger to whose feet love and fear lent wings, the child was dead long before I could reach him.

The parents' grief was something terrible to witness—the father's especially, though the mother's was more intense. When I went in to see my friend, after ascertaining that the promising little life of his son was extinct, I found him prostrate on the floor of his study.

I spoke to him gently, tenderly, as I might have done to the child. He cursed me, and ordered me away.

"It's your fault. If you had been at home, I should not have lost my son."

That was true enough, but it was not my fault; and I said something about bowing to the will of Providence.

"Do you think it was by God's will that my child died?" asked the poor, bereaved father, sitting up on the floor, and looking steadily at me, with a wild, terrifying expression in his deep-set eyes.

I murmured the assent which is too often unthinkingly given in such cases. The unhappy man flung himself once more with violence on the ground, in the exceeding bitterness of his soul.

I was afraid he would do himself an injury, and dreaded leaving him; although, by remaining a spectator of his anguish, I might irritate him more.

"Charles," I whispered, stooping down and lightly touching his shoulder—"Charles, my dear friend—my almost brother—pray, pray be calm. Let me persuade you to lie down."

"If you don't want me to do you a mis-

chief, leave me!" he shouted, but without raising his head from the ground.

Perhaps it was unwise of me to persist, but I continued—

"Remember the example you owe to your parishioners. What would they think, if they could see and hear you?"

His reply was a curse. It was useless trying to reason with the man in his then frame of mind, so I left him, not without misgiving, and went upstairs again to Mrs. Woodward's room, where she had remained in a swoon ever since the occurrence.

She had rallied, and was standing by the little bed whereon lay the poor child's body. The expression on her features was that of blank despair: not a tear welled from the sorrow-frozen eyes, not a sigh convulsed the grief-stricken heart. The poor soul was in a state of moral collapse, from which, I hope, she never afterwards entirely recovered.

Margery M'Anvil was with her, administering such consolation as was at her command; but it seemed to have little effect upon its object, whose mental gaze was fixed upon the "spirit land."

She wrung her hands in an excited manner on seeing me; and fearing an attack of hysterics, to which complaint she was subject, I urged her, as gently as I could, to be calm.

"Calm!" she cried, "I am calm. You see I do not shed a tear. Yes, I am calm, perfectly calm."

Here she commenced walking up and down the room, with her hands clasped upon her breast.

"You will make yourself ill," I said.

She laughed, a strangely discordant laugh—

"I never felt better, or stronger in my life. How is Charles? How does he bear it? He is sorry—don't you think so?"

"Sorry, Mrs. Woodward! the poor fellow is almost beside himself with grief. I would not have left him, only I felt I was in duty bound to come and see after you."

"Never mind me, I am quite well able to take care of myself—go to him. This comes of making an idol of the child. I often feared how it would be, though powerless to prevent it."

What could I say? I had had the same idea myself more than once. I said what words of consolation occurred to me, and finding them unheeded by the mourner, asked her if I should send Emma to her.

"No," she answered; "go to my husband—he will be uneasy about me, poor fellow. I cannot leave this room, or I would go to him myself. Good night. Margery will do all I want."

"I would recommend you to lie down, Mrs. Woodward."

"I shall not—not now, at least. Don't think me rude, but I wish you would go away and leave me."

I had not succeeded in my self-imposed rôle of consoler; perhaps I had not prosecuted it with sufficient tact.

I returned to the study. Charles was lying on the sofa. I spoke to him softly, but he gave me no answer. He was either asleep, or pretended to be. A momentary thrill passed through me.

"No, thank God!—he breathes."

I went out cautiously, carefully closed the door behind me, and turned my steps towards home, more disposed to cavil at the inscrutable decrees of an all-wise Providence than I had ever been in all my life before.

Emma would have gone to the vicarage at once, but I dissuaded her from doing so.

"The blow has been so awfully sudden, dearest," I said, "that they cannot even bear to think of it yet. To-morrow will find them calmer, and, I trust, more resigned."

As I have said, the sad occurrence caused intense excitement, not only in the parish, but throughout the country round.

The funeral procession was said to have been the largest ever witnessed in the county. Far more people followed the little coffin to its resting-place, in a quiet corner of Moighrath churchyard, than had been attracted by the gorgeous pageant exhibited at the interment of the late Sir Stewart.

Charles would not allow the child to be buried at Dumfernaghalee, probably because in that case the grave would have been constantly under his eye, reminding him of his irreparable loss. He selected a spot behind the church in the adjoining parish, shaded by a large yew tree, and there the poor little boy was laid in his untimely grave.

Mr. St. Clair performed the mournful ceremony.

Charles and his wife—for Mrs. Woodward insisted upon following her infant to his long home—were the chief, but not the only mourners: there was not a dry eye in the churchyard, except the bereaved mother's—yes, and Margery M'Anvil's.

After a few weeks had elapsed, Charles

appeared to have almost recovered his wonted elasticity of spirit; but his wife grew daily gloomier and more reserved, relapsing after a short time into her old self.

The chenille hair-net was once more called into requisition; but the grey locks were no longer sought to be concealed by either bear's grease or American cosmetic. The woman's heart was broken—nothing but her sense of wifely duty induced her to accept the burden of her now solitary life.

She made, at first daily, then frequent, pilgrimages to the little grave, which she planted with flowers with her own hands; and when the monumental cross was raised above it, she crowned it with wreaths of immortelles.

Yes, her life was solitary then, poor thing! Whilst the little one was alive, it seemed to have drawn its ill-matched parents nearer to each other than they had ever been; but once that silken tie was severed, they seemed to have parted wider asunder than ever, and, except at meal-times, rarely met. It was evident such a state of things could not last. Some change must take place—but what?

ME AND MY DOGS.

THE DOG I WOULD NOT HAVE.

I TOLD my landlady, after the death of a late pet, that I was quite determined not to have any more dogs about the premises; and so I was—thoroughly determined. One friend offered me a splendid Newfoundland pup, but I rejected him; another wanted me to accept a little sealing-wax-legged terrier that seemed to have descended, according to the Darwinian theory, from a spider or a gnat, so fragile were its limbs. I certainly was slightly tempted by a bulldog belonging to a relative bound on a tour through the States; and I hardly liked to refuse, for Nigger certainly was as ugly an animal as I ever set eyes on. There was a superiority about his ugliness that there was no gainsaying; while, when my relative recapitulated his good qualities, there was one highly commendatory trait that made me feel strongly disposed to offer him a home at the Grange.

"He'll tackle any dog," said my relative; "and if once he gets a fair hold, there'll be no chance of getting the poor wretch away alive. He has killed more dogs, sir, than any animal of his age; while the beauty of

him is that he goes at them with a dash, fastens on, and then sticks there without any noise beyond a low growl. Never heard him bark half a dozen times in my life. As for cats, it's a run, a rush, a squawl, and a shake, and it's all over. You might soon get yourself a catskin rug if you liked to take the trouble."

Qualities these in a dog for such an over-run place as Bubbley; but I resisted. Certainly, I should have liked to have seen the dogs and cats thinned out of the village, and should have felt some esteem for such a new-comer; but in the scope of my imagination came visions of outraged tabbies and murdered pets held up for my inspection. I felt afraid of the bench of magistrates, and conjured up fines inflicted in consequence of losses sustained; and then came the recollection of my determination to have no more dogs.

"Don't refuse, there's a good fellow," said my friend. "I should like to see Nigger have a good master. Go away all the more comfortable."

"But I shouldn't be a good master. Hate dogs."

"Nonsense—don't tell me," said my visitor. "Now, just look at him—he's outside. By your leave."

Before I could say a word, he had crossed the room, and thrown open the window.

"Here, Nig!" he shouted; and the next moment a geranium pot was in ruins and the bulldog in the room.

"There's a forehead!" said my relative, dragging the dog forward by the scruff of his neck, and pointing admiringly to his massive front. "There's teeth," he exclaimed, pulling up the lips, and showing the magnificent white dental apparatus of the dog. "There's a chest—broad as a horse! There's a pair of bow legs. And look at his fine and graceful loins. Did you ever see such a handsome beast in your life?"

"I never saw an uglier," I said, and with honesty.

"Ugly? Pooh! Nonsense! You can't call him ugly."

"Can't I? But I did," I said.

"But he's perfect as a dog," said my relative; "and really a better-tempered animal never existed. Now, look here."

I did "look here," and saw dog Nigger punched, kicked, banged, trodden upon, and treated with every possible contumely and insult; but he did not resent it in the

slightest degree. Hard as iron, he bore everything with the greatest of equanimity, barely flinching, and only winking one eye, while the look he gave with the other seemed to say—

"All right, master—but you don't mean it."

If ever dog had sound common sense, if I may be allowed to judge from so short an interview, I should say that Nigger was that dog, in spite of his atrocious name; and more than once I was on the point of yielding. Often afterwards I wished that I had, for his presence would have guarded me against an infliction from which I suffered for months after.

"You see," said my relative, "I picked you out from a score of other fellows, and I really shall be disappointed if you won't take old Nig. I know he'd take to you thoroughly; while as to children, he loves 'em. I've seen them sit on him, pull his ears, hammer him, pull his tail, do every mortal thing that can be done to a dog, without his taking a bit of notice."

"But really, my dear fellow—" I began.

"You think he's a coward—that's it," said my relative; "but, 'pon honour, a better dog never lived. Haven't got a cat here, have you? He'd polish her off in two twos. Dog either. I should just like you to see him go at a bull. You'd be astonished."

"No doubt, when I do witness such a performance I shall be," I replied; and, steeling my heart more and more, I resisted all persuasions towards becoming the owner of the great gladiator Nigger, in spite of his amiable character and disposition.

But he was a fine fellow, in spite of his black, heavy, low, prize-fighting look; and, unable as he was to help his origin, it were hard to blame the poor fellow for his natural propensities. He thought no more of killing a fellow-dog than of picking a bone—it was a meritorious action with him; and, speaking from after-knowledge of his character, I believe that I am justified in saying that he would have nipped the life out of either of his respected parents with the greatest of nonchalance—lying down and winking his eyes afterwards as if nothing particular had been amiss. I do not mean to say, mind, that he had been a parricide or matricide; in fact, I should doubt very much whether he had ever known his parents, but should suppose that he had fought his way

through life as best he could until he fell into the possession of my literary-relative, who now found it necessary to provide him with another master.

However, I was determined not to have so fierce a quadruped upon the premises; and, greatly to my relief, Nigger's master soon after left the house, accompanied, as I fancied, by his dog; but ten minutes had not elapsed when, to my great discomposure, as I was sitting reading, a cold wet nose touched my hand, and, starting and looking down, there stood black, big-headed, broad-chested, bow-legged Nigger, gazing up in my face as much as to say—

"I'm to stop here."

As a matter of course, my first step was to open the front door and order the intruder off, when I found my friend standing at a distance, and looking back; while, as the dog neared him, I could see that he was showing it something, and driving it back. At full speed came back Nigger, dashed by me through the hall, and into the study, where he scampered about for a few moments ere he returned with his master's glove, one which he had left behind. And then my heart somewhat warmed towards the intensely ugly animal—but he was gone; and whatever may have been his fate, I never saw him more.

SOUND WITHOUT SENSE.

THERE was a young lady of Cork,
Who would comb her hair with a fork;
When they said, "Why, at home,
You sometimes use a comb,"
She said, "Yes, when for dinner we've pork."

There was a young lady of Sark,
Who objected to sleep in the dark;
When they brought her a light
She exclaimed, "It's too bright;
I think I must marry some spark."

There was a young lady at Brompton,
Who hated her piano thumped on;
When Professor Dough Raay
Played a fan-ta-si-a,
She declared that he ought to be pumped on.

TABLE TALK.

A FRIEND at a fashionable church has just had to give up his neat little satin-lined, be-crossed collecting bags, used at the offertory, and been compelled to take once more to the open plates; for when people are left to give in secret, and not suffered to have

the coin exposed to view, they are led, by some strange inconsistency or moral obliquity, into playing at what Dick Swiveller's friend, the Marchioness, called "making believe." For instance, people to whom the cant term "swell" is applied as a class have been known to drop buttons in the bag, probably taking Oliver Wendell Holmes's advice concerning street musicians; others are guilty of grandeeism in gifts of a bladdery type—that is to say, profess to give much when their contribution is infinitesimally small. One lady of great pretensions was found out the other day. Found out? Well, perhaps the term is too strong. But, look here—it was always supposed by the other occupants of the sitting that their silken-robed, haughty acquaintance bestowed florins and half-crowns, while they dropped into the bag their own poor, modest threepenny and sixpenny pieces. The day came, though, when the sleek gentleman who collects on our side came round, the bag was passed along, and madame ostentatiously extended her tightly-gloved hand to drop in her heavy coin, when there was a slip, a rattle, and a roll along the encaustic tiles of the central aisle, for thirty or forty pairs of eyes to behold that the sumptuous coin that dropped was the well-known bronze of the British coinage—the immortal penny! It is rumoured that the lady has not since been seen at church.

It seems that it is not always safe to buy your fish even at the seaside, for proximity to the briny waves does not assure freshness. Here is an incident from a well-known watering-place. The vendor of soles called a visitor's attention to his stock-in-trade, but found that the stranger would not deal, for the reason that the last fish purchased of the vendor was so bad that it had to be thrown away. "Well, marm," was the defence, "it was your own fault, not mine; for I was calling them soles in front of your house for three days before you'd buy 'em."

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 295.

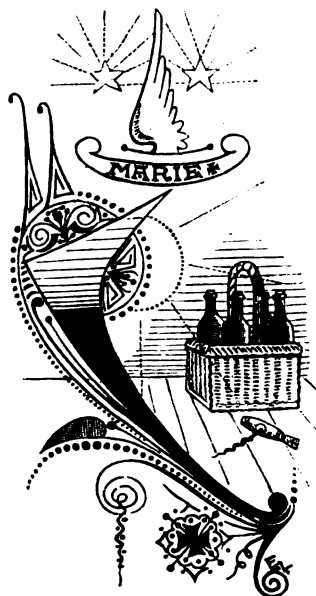
August 23, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW JAMES HAD A FEW WORDS.



HE gentleman bearing the name of Abram Higgs was not handsome, but he possessed muscle. His face was decidedly inexpressive, so much so that it

was puzzling

to find therein anything attractive. It struck you that when Nature made it, and gazed upon her handiwork, she must have exclaimed, "Well, poor fellow, he must have something to eat with!" so she gave a slash with her knife, and the man had a mouth.

It is a matter of course that handsome men make many impressions on the soft wax of the fair sex; but then, handsome men are very few and far between: hence it must be that the he who is remarkably plain has his chance. It might have been thought that Jane chose Mr. Higgs for his ugliness; possibly, however, she could see merit below the surface, and acted like a sensible woman.

James declared emphatically that he was a beast; but then James was a partial judge, and viewed him from a rival's point of view, scowling savagely whenever they met; and upon the present occasion, when, Jane having gone upstairs, he requested Mr. Higgs to step into the boot-house with him for the exchange of a few words, Abram thought slowly that he had not seen so fine a scowl since Mr. Phelps played Richard the Third last at their theatre.

"If you will have the goodness to step this way, Mr. Higgs," said James, "I will not detain you long."

This was said mincingly, and with an air of mock refinement that ought to have made a great impression upon Higgs; but it did not, for in addition to his taking in things very slowly, Abram had a habit—acquired of course from his surroundings—of thinking that everybody was acting a part. Therefore he was not at all surprised at Mr. James's melodramatic scowl and way of asking him into the boot-house—a large skylighted building, illumined by a single gas jet, which displayed arrangements on one side for cleaning knives, and on the other blacking brushes and bottles, boot trees, and shoe lasts.

Apparently waiting here for a particular reason were the under-butler, in the comfortable negligé of a striped jacket; the coachman, a stout gentleman in a great deal of white neckcloth and a sleeved waistcoat; and the page, a youth of about sixteen, who startled his friends with the duality of his nature; for whereas he addressed them one minute in the rumbling tones of a deep bass, manly voice, the next he had retrograded, or rather gone up, to the treble of boyhood; so that, as the coachman said, you never knew where to have him.

"Hev the goodness to step in here, sir," said James, with dignity; and Abram Higgs went slowly in, for all the world as if he were pushing a wing before him.

James followed smartly, and as soon as he was inside, he closed the half-glass door with a bang, locked it, took the key out with a rattle, and handed it to the coachman, who was seated amongst the blacking brushes smoking his pipe, and taking occasional sips from a horn of ale.

"Hev the goodness to take charge of this, Jarvey," said James, handing the key, which the coachman put in his pocket with a slap.

As for Higgs, he looked slowly round, and nodded to each in turn—Buttons coming in for a wink as well, which wink was a free-masonry way of saying to the lad—

"How did you like the piece you saw when I gave you the order?"

"Now we've got you, I think," said James, loudly, as he gave a triumphant smile at his fellow servants.

"Eh?" said Higgs.

"I say," repeated James, "now, I think, we've got you."

"Yes," said Higgs, slowly and stolidly; "I think you've got me."

"Just so," said James. "And now, if you please, I want you, in the presence of these gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!" said the coachman.

"In the presence of these gentlemen," continued James, "to undertake to keep away from this house, where you are not wanted."

"Keep away?" said Higgs, slowly.

"Yes, sir, did you not understand what I said?"

"Oh, yes, I understood what you said well enough," said Higgs; "but I don't understand what you mean."

"Then I must make you, sir," said James.

"Thanky," said Higgs, coolly.

"The fact is, sir," said James, pompously, "you are not wanted here."

"Oh, there you're quite wrong—quite wrong, my lad. I'm wanted safe enough, or else you may be sure I shouldn't come."

"But I say, sir, as you're not wanted," said James, with dignity.

"Oh, I hear what you say, my lad; but when a chap's acting and says as he means to have another chap's blood, he don't mean it, bless you, not a bit."

"Hear, hear, hear!" shouted the coachman again.

"Jest hev the goodness not to interrupt, if you please, Jarvey," said James.

"Hear, he— I mean all right," said the coachman, gruffly.

"Lookye here, Mr. Higgs," said James, pronouncing the word as if it were the concentrated essence of vulgarity—"lookye here. I have told you that you are not wanted here; and, sir, you refuse to understand me. You compel me to lower myself, and to set aside the customary ways of gentlemen respecting such a delicate subject as a lady, and to speak in the coarse, familiar homespun of your rank in society."

"Hear, hear!" said the coachman, again.

"That's one for him," muttered the underbutler, and the page looked on approvingly.

"Now, see here," said Higgs, slowly; "it's getting late, and I want to be off."

"Yes, I've no doubt you do," said James, with a half laugh; "but we haven't done with you yet."

"Well, then, you'd better make haste, that's all," said Higgs.

"I shall proceed as I please," said James, "for you can't get away. And now, once for all, will you promise to stay away from this house?"

"No," said Higgs, stoutly.

"Then," said James, "my good fellow, I shall be obliged to make you. Henry, hev the goodness to hold my coat. Jarvey, you will see fair. This place is quite retired, and we shall not be heard in the house."

"Oh," said Higgs, "that's it, is it? You want to fight."

"Yes, sir," said James, divesting himself of his outer attire. "I intend either to make you promise what I wish, or to punish your insolence. Are you ready?"

"Well," said Higgs, slowly, "I don't know that I am; for I can't say as I like fighting."

"Ha—ha—ha!" laughed James, sardonically, "I suppose not. Then will you promise to give up all claims to the young lady who resides here?"

"Do you mean Jane?" said Higgs.

"Yes, sir, I mean Miss Jane Smithers," said James, haughtily.

"Do you mean, will I give her up?" said Higgs.

"My good fellow," said James, with great dignity, "your comprehension seems to me to be really of the lowest order. I repeat it for you. I'll repeat it for you a dozen times if you like—that is what I do mean."

"What, give up Jane?" said Higgs again.

"Yes, sir, give up Miss Jane Smithers," said James, with more dignity than before.

"Then, come on," said Higgs.

"Let me hold your coat," squeaked the page.

"No, thanky," said Higgs.

"Or your hat," growled the page from his pedal pipes.

But Abram Higgs did not seem to hear him; for he slowly moistened his palms, doubled up his fists, and as James struck an elegant attitude, copied from the noble art of self-defence, Abram turned himself edgewise to his antagonist, and held out one big fist at arm's length, rigid as the bough of a tree.

Now, lest any refined reader should imagine that here follows a full and particular account, à la *Bell's Life*, of the great mill between the Dandy Footman and the Pet of the Ballet, with an accurate description of the various rounds, embellished with the proper prize ring sauce of cant phraseology, we beg to state that the encounter was very short, sharp, and perfectly bloodless; inasmuch as Abram Higgs constantly held out, as if for James's inspection, that one big, bony fist of his at arm's length, presenting it always very near to his rival's visual organs, whilst, with his other fist held close to his body, he performed a sort of spiral movement, half-way round to the right, half-way round to the left, as if by and by he meant to bore a hole right through his opponent's chest.

However, apparently nothing daunted, James, whose sleeves were rolled up to the elbows, danced a little to the right, and then a little to the left; then he made a hit at Abram Higgs's nose, with his right fist, which must have produced most unpleasant results had the said nose been a yard nearer to the striker. Failing here, he tried with the other fist; and this time the assault was evidently intended for the enemy's mouth. But here again there was failure, four feet long.

The page was in ecstasies, and the coachman and under-butler audibly signified their approval of the science displayed; for James now made a series of feints and blows at nothing, shaking his head, ducking it, holding it a little to the right, then a little to the left, and at last administered two sweeping cuts right and left at Abram Higgs's rigidly held out fist, but without

altering its position more than a few inches each way.

"I think the end of the first round ought to be now," said the under-butler.

"Yes, cert'n'y," said the coachman. "Have a drop of beer, my lads."

Nothing loth, the two combatants beered themselves, and then once more returned to the conflict.

The tactics were precisely the same, only that James displayed a considerable amount more agility—dodging, feinting, dancing here, there, right, left, advance, retire, shake, bend, butt, dive, recover, and begin again; till Abram Higgs seemed to get tired of the display, and, watching his opportunity, after holding his left fist out all the time for James to smell, which the latter emphatically declined to do, he suddenly threw out his right fist so sharply that it came in contact with the third button from the bottom of James's waistcoat, when at the same moment there was heard that peculiar ejaculation to which the paviours of our streets give vent when they bring down their rammers; and, in theatrical parlance, James was discovered lying of a heap in the dust, in the extreme corner beneath the knifeboard.

"Pull him out, and give him some ale," said the coachman, without attempting to move from his throne amongst the blacking brushes.

"But he won't come," said the page, who was dragging at one leg.

"Why don't you 'elp him out, Ennery?" said the coachman.

And urged by the rebuke, Ennery proceeded to haul out his fellow-servant, who gave a loud groan, and then sank down as limp as so much jelly.

"Time's up," said the coachman, at a venture.

James lay perfectly still.

"I think," said Ennery, "that the affair of honour is over."

"Well, yes," said the coachman; "I don't think we can do any more. Mr. Higgs, sir, your very good health."

"Thanky," said Higgs, slowly; and then stooping over James, he said—"I'm going now, my lad, so good night. I don't think I've hurt you very much, and if you want me again, I shall be back on Friday night."

James remained perfectly unconscious; while Higgs solemnly shook hands all round, and was let out by the coachman, who went to see him to the door; but directly the

closing was heard, James suddenly came to himself, leaped up, struck an attitude as if to recommence the fray, and then looked round as if in astonishment.

"Where is he?" he exclaimed.

"Why, he's gone," said the page, grinning.

"A cowardly wretch," cried James, excitedly; "but I'll be revenged!"

And then he resigned himself to the page, who carefully brushed him down.

CHAPTER XIX.

DOUBTS AND FEARS.

TIME glided on, and the Rivières were still inmates of Sir Richard Lawler's home: not welcome guests, as far as the baronet was concerned, for more than once his behaviour had been such as to make Rivière exclaim to the partner of his exile—

"But they are brutal, these English. He treats me like a dog; and yet it is only his way, for his heart is large and full of gratitude towards me."

"Do you think so, Louis?" said madame.

"Think? Am I not sure? I could have turned upon him but this day with anger for his words, only miladi laughed, and said, 'Richard is so brusque. Don't mind him, Monsieur Rivière; it is only his insular manner. Is it not, Richard?'"

"And what said he?" inquired madame.

"He laughed, and said, yes, it was but his insular way; and I was ready to embrace him."

In fact, any coldness displayed by Sir Richard was more than compensated by his lady, who immediately grew effusive, and insisted on their guests making the house in Grosvenor-square their home.

"I sha'n't stand it much longer, Addy," exclaimed Sir Richard, one evening, after they were alone. "I shall give that wretched little Frenchman a couple of five-pound notes, and tell him to go to the devil."

"You'll do no such thing, Dick," was the reply.

"Indeed, but I will; for I'm sick of it."

"You had better be careful," said Lady Lawler, maliciously. "The French are very free with their challenges."

"Challenges! What, duelling! I should like to see the scoundrel have the insolence—to dare— Why, confound him, I'd hand him over to the police."

"And have it in all the papers next day."

"And whose fault would that be?" ex-

claimed Sir Richard, angrily. "Now, look here, Addy. You're playing off this wretched fellow—who has no more legs than a jack-ass, no more biceps than a broomstick—against me, to— to make me angry—to make me jealous; and, by Jove, I won't be! It's too contemptible. I won't condescend to be angry about it."

"No," said Lady Lawler, fanning herself gently, "I would not."

"But I won't stand it, either," he continued. "It shall come to an end somehow. It's—there, I'll say it, though I did not mean to—it's my belief that, if I had not said a word about it, they would have been gone before now—"

"Very likely," said Lady Lawler, with the greatest nonchalance.

"And that you keep them here on purpose to annoy me."

He looked round, as if expecting another remark; but Lady Lawler was still fanning herself, and, according to appearances, was not taking the slightest notice of her lord and master—who tugged at his great blond moustache, scowled, and then strode out of the room, hot and angry.

"It isn't worth making a fuss about," he exclaimed as he went out of the room; "but, if I do come to hot words with that—"

He stopped short, unclenched his fists, and smoothed his rugged forehead; for he became aware that James was looking at him, and had probably overheard his remark.

"Well, sir?" he exclaimed.

"I was going to light the gas in the smoking-room, Sir Richard," said the man, meekly.

"Then go and light it," growled the baronet; and he scowled at the man till he had disappeared.

"And if I find they get talking about this in the servants' hall, I'll—I'll discharge the first scoundrel who dares to say a word."

A threat that he was not likely to put in force, though he would have been ten times more wroth had he known that the drawing-room relations with the French guests had been the theme of his servants' conversation for some time past, and that, had he determined to make dismissal the penalty for talking about these matters, he would not have had a servant left.

It was evident, though, that Madame Rivière was not comfortable in her present position; and again and again she hinted at

the desirability of their leaving, and taking up a position of independence. This was generally on the evening of some day when Lady Lawler had been more than usually kind—taking her out in the carriage for exercise, or upon some shopping expedition, defraying all expenses, and never ceasing to pay embarrassing small attentions to the gentle little woman—embarrassing, for, setting aside her distrust of Lady Lawler, Marie Rivière felt that she was leading a life of indolent luxury, while her husband was spending hour after hour wandering about the streets of the great city, seeking vainly the means of obtaining subsistence.

They were both too proud to say much upon this subject to their host and hostess, while the latter were too ignorant upon the point to see the difficulties of the case. It was something incomprehensible to them that two people should want money to provide for their daily wants. Of course they knew what poverty was—had heard it spoken of—had seen cases in low neighbourhoods; but seeing the poverty of others, and realizing it to the point of being poor and suffering deeply, these are two very different things. To realize poverty, one must have been in want, for no description can bring its wretchedness and privations home to the heart of him who is in the land of plenty.

It was a difficult matter to arrange, this assistance of the Rivières. Sir Richard Lawler was too indifferent, and her ladyship too ignorant. If Rivière had said to Lady Lawler, "Let me have five hundred pounds, to ensure independence while I seek out some engagement," her ladyship would have exclaimed, "Yes, certainly, my dear Monsieur Rivière," have thrust her hand into her purse, and found that she had only a five-pound note and some loose silver; and, lastly, have gone off to her husband, and worried him until he had written the necessary cheque. The matter would have been simplicity itself; and allowing say a week, at the outside, for the bringing of Sir Richard Lawler into shape, the thing would have been done.

Yes, but there was the asking. Louis Rivière might perhaps have lowered himself to this pitch for the sake of saving his wife from suffering, but not for himself.

It was one evening, after a day of unsatisfactory wanderings, that Rivière stood, candle in hand, leaning against the chim-

ney-piece, his wife gazing earnestly the while in his pallid face.

"Still nothing, then?" she said, after a long pause.

"Still nothing, Marie, mon ange," he said, softly—"still nothing. Work seems to be a myth, a dancing light in some marsh; and, as I run to grasp it, still it flees from my hand. Ah, my child," he groaned, "how I have envied the grimy working men that I see pouring out of factory and workshop—independent, happy in their work, fearing nothing; eating their well-earned food, returning proudly to face wife and children, sleeping the restful sleep of the heart at peace; while I—I— My child, I go through the streets ashamed, blushing for my beggary; and come back here, a very abject, to be the scoff and scorn of those canaille of servants. Ah, sacre! if I but had them here!"

He crushed down his heel upon the rich carpet, and stood frowning and angry, till the soft, sweet voice of Marie seemed to calm this wild ebullition of spirit; and, as she spoke, he turned to her smiling, to lay his hand upon her shoulder.

"Still we are free, Louis," she whispered.

"Still we are free," he repeated.

"Yes, we are free," she whispered, placing her arms upon his shoulders, and kissing him fondly; "but do not think me unkind and ungrateful when I say that it is hardly the freedom we have longed for. These people are very kind, but—"

"Ah, bah! do not think of it," he said, cheerfully. "I do not like it at times, and then it goes away, and I feel better. They do not mind. Sir Richard is the gruff Englishman, but miladi is goodness herself. She does all she can to make us happy."

"But it makes me unhappy," said Marie, sadly.

"Unhappy? Yes. But you mean more than simple unhappiness. You are thinking!" he said, sharply.

"Oh, Louis," she said, clinging to him, "do not be angry. I cannot help it. Think how that you are all in all to me—how I love you with a love that has grown stronger day by day. It is wicked, doubting, cruel; but I cannot help the feelings; and it seems to me that I live in dread of this fine, handsome Englishwoman. She appears to me to overshadow me, to hide me from my husband's eyes; and to be daily drawing you farther and farther away from your sim-

ple, plain little wife, now that she has but just won you back to her side."

"Tut! tut! tut!—silly one!" cried Rivière, caressing her as she clung to him, sobbing; "but these are the words of a child—a baby. Have we not troubles enough, without making fresh ones? These feelings—these fancies of yours—what are they? Nothing—nothing at all."

"Take me away, Louis—take me away," she said, hysterically. "Take me away from this place—it is hateful to me."

"But, my little one, what can I do? I cannot take you out into the streets. You cannot bear again the miseries of our escape. Think how tender, how delicate you are now. Try and bear with it for awhile, my own, and then we will go. But to go now—it would be folly. I am helpless. What can I do? I ask for work here—mechanical work. They shake their heads. A dozen—twenty—a hundred Englishmen are waiting. And then the barbarians smile at my physique, as they compare it with that of their own brawny giants."

"But a room—a crust," murmured Marie.

"Bah! child, I cannot starve you for your fancies—it would be cruel. And look, again: I try for music—for to teach French. *Mon Dieu!* there are a thousand poor exiles struggling, one against the other, to get the bread; and they underbid one another in their hunger. This London is a cruel place, Marie."

"But," cried Marie, pitifully, "I am weak and ill now, and the thoughts I have here seem too hard to bear."

"Think then, my child," he said, tenderly, "think then what they would be in some wretched garret in the French quarter, where all is misery around. I should be away from you day after day, and you would not have a soul to whom you could speak. Have patience, little one. You should be in comfort here. Bear with any little slights, and soon we shall be away. I have not been idle. I have made plans, and they will some day bear fruit. It is not my wish to stay; but now this place is a refuge, a shelter from the storm. And *miladi*, she is kind?"

"Yes, she is kind," said Marie, looking at her husband in a strange, dreamy way.

"Then be at peace," he exclaimed, almost harshly, in the authoritative tones in which he spoke. "Do not anger me with such childish thoughts. You—jealous! It is too

much, Marie. You make me mad. It is cruel, or it is unjust."

Marie Rivière drew herself back so as to gaze more fully in her husband's eyes, which met hers without blenching. But at that moment there seemed to float before her vision the handsome, fair, bold face of Lady Lawler; and as she shrank away from her husband's grasp, a shiver ran through her, and the tears that now fell silently were scalding to her aching eyes.

IN FANTI LAND.

ON a lovely morning in March, when in the soft blue ether not a cloud was to be seen, the sea was calm as a lake, with the beams of the morning sun just silvering the ripples that were raised by the last gentle breath of the land breeze, we let go our anchor off Cape Coast Castle. The old *Cabo Costo*, or *Cruising Castle*, of the Portuguese rovers, built on rocks stretching out into the sea, looked white and pretty in the distance, against the background of low hills, covered with thick gum bush; whilst here and there long, low, flat-roofed, and white-washed buildings, scattered about on different small eminences amongst the afore-said bush, gave evidence of inhabitants who soared above the traditional mud hut in which every one is supposed to live in Africa. These were the houses of the merchants, European and native; and in their interiors not much, if at all, inferior to those of the same class or rank in England. I was the only passenger for the *Gold Coast*. All the others were bound for the "*Rivers*," as they were called. A rough, but not unkindly, lot of men they were; whose whole thoughts of enjoyment were cards, with brandy and water, cutting for sovereigns, tossing for drinks of strange names, smoking, eating, and sleeping. One or two faster even than these—a dashing, handsome Irish doctor in particular—were perpetually studying the racing intelligence, and making books, real or imaginary, on the coming Derby and other races. I bade them all a friendly adieu—for though not very intimate with any, I had joggled along during the month we had been on board together very comfortably—and running down the side ladder, I was just about to step into the canoe that had come to receive my traps, when a sudden roll of the steamer sent the ladder up in the air and the canoe a few

yards off. Fortunately for me, I had gripped hold of the side-rope, and from that I hung, though it was at some risk of having my body soused into the the sea by the next roll of the steamer, or my legs crushed between the side of the steps and the canoe, which was now coming up again.

After hanging for some seconds in this undignified position, I got back on the steps again by a strong exercise of my gymnastic powers, and then more cautiously essayed another saltatory movement to get into the canoe; and this time was rather more successful, though I damaged my shins against the thwarts, and dirtied my clean white jean coat on the oily skin of a Fanti canoeman, who caught me in his arms to save me from going over the side into the blue waves that were just beginning to feel the influence of the sea breeze that was setting in. Off we went, dancing over the waves, for we were a good two miles from the shore; and though the sea had been to all appearance calm as a lake in some hot, still summer's day, yet midway, when we came to the first roller where the surf began, we found it a very different thing. Outside these rollers the canoe stopped—an ominous pause, I thought, and intended to extort money from me. However, my suspicions were wrong: they were only waiting for the proper moment to catch the sweep of the wave, and then to be borne on the top of the huge roller on to the second; and so on, till we neared the beach. Then there was a frantic paddling as for bare life, until, with a heavy shock, the canoe bumps upon the beach with its flat bottom, and a dozen dark forms are standing by in the boiling surf, ready to carry me on shore. This is not accomplished without considerable damage to one's clean, white continuations, as the brown seems to come off like fresh paint from the dark skins of the African canoemen, and I consequently did not make my appearance in quite as spotless a costume as I should have desired, in the mess-room, where the officers of the Gold Coast Artillery commissariat and medical staff were discussing a very meagre meal.

The great evil of the Coast is the dearth of wholesome food. Fresh beef is nearly unknown; so that mutton of the leanest and scraggiest kind, and fowls tough and thin as greyhounds in training for coursing matches, are the only fresh provisions to be got. To supplement these, recourse was had to

tinned meats, hams, sardines, and the different edibles which Crosse and Blackwell, or Morton, put up for the benefit of suffering humanity. Our mess-room was a fine airy apartment, standing on a rock, surrounded on three sides by the harsh resounding sea; and to those unaccustomed to the continual "boom, boom" of the waves that dashed unceasingly against the reef on which the castle was built, the noise was deafening and unpleasant.

I believe my arrival at the breakfast-table caused some dismay, as adding another mouth to be filled, and a fresh claimant for the scanty supply of boiled chicken. However, the mess caterer, a handsome young fellow lately arrived from England, left the room for a few minutes, and shortly returned followed by Lakke, the mess butler, who was a sergeant in the artillery, and a chief of high rank amongst the natives of that part of the Coast. An excellent, faithful fellow he was, always in good temper, and with a smile on his face when spoken to. He was now laden with some good things added in my honour, and the eyes of an Irish ensign brightened at the sight of two pots of jam. He was a strict follower of Father Mathew, and consequently ate enough for three moderate people at every meal; and the havoc he made in a pot of jam was something alarming.

Breakfast over, I found all my future associates dispersed each to his own room, to read his English letters and papers; for in those days of only-one mail a month, every one was sure of some correspondence to engage his attention. The caterer was also adjutant of the corps, and he had his hands full; though he showed me every attention and courtesy which he could, occupied as he was.

It was a woefully dull day, the first I spent at Cape Coast Castle; and all succeeding were nearly as dull, a palaver with the station chiefs being about the only break in the monotony of the life led by military officers there. One of these palavers was painful enough. Some two or three months previous to my arrival, two young men who stated themselves to be Assins, or natives of a state now under our protection, but formerly subject to Ashantee, had enlisted in the Gold Coast Corps. They were remarkable as being amongst the smartest and best recruits we had, and one of them already bore an acting bombardier's

stripe. Soon after I took the command, I was requested by the Colonial Secretary to have the men paraded without arms, as the governor had received a letter from the King of Ashantee saying that two runaway slaves of his, who had been guilty of some social crime, had enlisted in the Gold Coast Artillery, and were now in the castle. By our treaties with that very savage potentate, we were bound to deliver up any subjects of his who had fled from his tyranny; and in this part of the world the flag of England was no protection, and a British fort or uniform no palladium of safety.

The men were paraded, and the governor, with the King's messengers, bearing the gold-hilted scimitar of the Ashantee monarch, came down to the yard. The envoys walked straight to where the Assins were, and, pointing them out as the objects of their search, claimed them. After a long discussion, the unhappy creatures were ordered to be given up; and with the entire sympathy of their officers, but without any idea of what was about to occur so soon, they were led away, stripped of their uniform, back to Kumasi. They, however, too well knew what was in store for them if they ever reached that blood-stained capital; and the ashy paleness of their faces, visible even in their dark skins, betrayed an amount of mental agony and suffering that penetrated my heart deeply as I saw them led away by the savage, vindictive guards who had come to claim them. It appears that, knowing the tortures that awaited them in Kumasi, they determined to die ere they reached that place, and soon after they left the town of Cape Coast a violent struggle took place between them and their escort. They did not try to escape now, for they had nowhere to fly to—their last hope, that of safety under British protection, had gone; and in a speedy death now lay their only chance of avoiding the tortures which they would have otherwise suffered. In obtaining this they were successful; for the Ashantees, who were anxious to return their own country, tired of dragging them along, as they refused to walk, at length coolly and deliberately chopped off their heads and hands, and leaving the bodies in the highway, not more than a mile from Cape Coast town, pursued their way, bearing the ghastly trophies to their master as a proof that they had executed vengeance on those who had offended him.

Just about this time, the King of Fanti

happening to die, we had an opportunity of witnessing the obsequies of a great African chief. As the deceased had been able to bring some five thousand armed men into the field, the attendance was large, and we were well deafened with the continual roar of muskets through the day, as the mourners defiled past the castle walls. The most grotesque and striking part of the whole procession, however, was a number of women—the wives and other female relatives and friends of the dead king—who marched past clad in "blue baidi," the mourning de rigueur in West Africa, and with an accompaniment of thigh-bones beating on skulls. Whence they procured these ghastly relics, I cannot say—whether they were kept in stock as band instruments for such solemnities, or were taken from victims slaughtered for the occasion. The latter, however possible some fifty years ago, would now be highly improbable.

To break the monotony of our life at the castle, a friend proposed a visit to St. George del Mina; and hammocks, with eight bearers for each, to traverse the short distance of nine miles, being furnished by the contractor at a charge of some £2 there and back, we started one afternoon to visit the Dutch settlement, which with its white-washed forts and buildings, situated in a slight indentation of the coast line, looked picturesque and alluring enough to me; and on nearer contact, I must say it did not disappoint me, the streets being cleaner and the houses better than at Cape Coast.

Our road, after the first two miles, lay along a sandy beach, and the fatigue for a European would have been too great, it was supposed, to walk over the heavy sand. As there is scarcely any perceptible tide on this part of the West Coast shore, the sand did not afford any hard, firm footing.

We were met at the Sweet River, about half a mile from Elmina, by a servant of Mr. C. Bartels, a native gentleman, whose name for generous—nay, profuse—hospitality and good-fellowship stands deservedly high. He was an accomplished musician, and well read, beyond even the usual amount of knowledge found in a highly educated European. We were sumptuously lodged at his house—a palatial mansion, whose only fault was being built too much in the European style, and consequently ill-adapted for a tropical climate.

The gardens were laid out with much

taste; and plants and fruits imported from other countries at considerable expense were growing well. Mr. Bartels had studied botany, and was then engaged in experimenting on the bark of a tree indigenous to the West Coast, from which he hoped to extract cinchona, or a substitute for that expensive and indispensable drug.

Our dinner was a sumptuous one, and I tasted that night one of the greatest rarities and dainties in that part of the world—a chine of African wild boar. These animals are so rare, and so ferocious when found, that few natives venture to follow them; and it was only through the wealth and influence of our host, who kept several huntsmen to supply his table with game, that we got such a treat. Partridge and bush turkey were also part of our repast, and some delicious ortolans on toast wound it up. I felt inclined to sigh deeply at its conclusion, when my mind wandered back to the meagre fare of Cape Coast. I have only alluded to the rarities and dainties of the feast; but a magnificent haunch and legs of mutton roasted whole faced me, and a huge turkey at the other end, with numberless native dishes, made the table groan under the profuse hospitality of our entertainer.

Two Dutch officers and an American supercargo, a well-known character on the Coast, were guests as well as ourselves; the Dutchmen hardly spoke anything but Dutch, and our conversation was very limited; whilst I sat next a very pretty black lady, beautifully and tastefully dressed, who could not understand or speak one word of English. She was the wife of Mr. Bartels. There was an amusing fellow at table, however, who kept every one on the titter at his sayings: he was the editor of a local paper, and, had his abilities been properly directed, he might have done much to benefit his countrymen. He had lately come into collision with a magistrate in one of the courts, and had come to Elmina to avoid arrest.

After dinner Mr. Bartels proposed a cup; and a huge glass jug, which had been standing in an icing machine lately imported, was brought forward. It held over a gallon, and the cup was certainly the most delicious I have ever tasted. Green tea, claret, curaçoa, and a decoction of pippins steeped in rum; this, with some seltzer water, was most refreshing, equalling the far-famed pepper punch of Demerara. We sat to a very late hour, and spent a pleasant evening. Our

bed-rooms were adjoining, large and lofty, with almost too much of European luxury.

The only real adventure I had was with a huge black spider that I found in the earthen water-bottle on my toilet table, and which resolutely faced me. I have had from childhood an aversion to these insects almost unconquerable, and I shrunk back from the table, calling a black servant to my aid. He laughed at my fears; and it was with great difficulty and some threats that I got him to kill the thing, which jumped some four or five feet at a spring across the room. The negroes worship these horrid creatures—at least, they are a kind of fetish amongst them. I only felt relief when the window was opened, and my sable domestic had taken the dead insect by one of its great hairy legs—which, at the thickest part, were equal in size to a boy's slate pencil—and flung it out into the field.

The morning was delicious and cool; and from the windows of my bed-room the eye could range over a landscape varied and beautiful. In the far distance, dim blue hills were to be seen, which our host told us were in Ashantee; and nearer to us were valleys, green and fresh, with limpid brooks purling in their midst; fields of Indian corn, just turning yellow, with their feathery heads. Palm trees in groups studded the whole face of the landscape, and magnificent cedars, umbrella trees, and African oaks scattered all round, with clumps of smaller bushes, gave a park-like appearance to the whole face of the country. The odour of the honeysuckle and some sweet flowers from our host's garden, which he had brought from the Assin forests, and that in smell partook both of the violet and peach kernel, would have been almost overpowering but for the delicious freshness of the early morn.

We found coffee and biscuit waiting for us in an ante-room of the superb apartment we had dined in the night before; and custard apples, silver bananas—a small species of that delicious fruit—pine apples, and the custard were piled on crystal dishes in rich profusion. Grapes were hanging in clusters from the verandah outside, but were not ripe enough to taste. The inevitable case of champagne was brought in too; for without this the first thing in the morning nothing seems to be possible in Africa, and to it our host's brother—a gentleman rejoicing in a gorgeous smoking cap, and slippers

embroidered in gold, with a many-hued dressing-gown of shawl pattern, gold cord and tassels—applied himself in preference to our fragrant mocha.

A Dutch officer whom we had not before seen came in as we were preparing for a stroll, and looked at us with a savage and ferocious air; for the Dutch, as a rule, hated us cordially, though some had the good sense to disguise their feelings rather better than the present individual, whose sole delight seemed to be to make himself appear as boorish as possible. He snorted at us, and grunted something in reply to our polite salutations on being introduced; and then, when asked to take coffee, said—“None; I vil tak’ some beer and von bit brod and cheese, Charles—hein!” the latter expletive with a savage snap of the teeth that made me fancy he would have liked to have crunched us up with the “brod and cheese.”

We strolled from our host’s mansion to Mrs. Last’s, to visit the supercargo. This was the only hotel in the place. The lady who kept it was the wife of a Dutch official, who had returned to his native land leaving her well endowed with goods; and she combined the double business of hotel-keeper and trader. All the Americans put up at her house, and she consequently had many advantages from their proximity. One would have fancied that she might have grown rich; but, on the contrary, she was said to be poor. Her clerks robbed her; her domestic slaves were a heavy tax, and robbed her too; and her own love of fine clothes, which she never wore, ate up all her profits. She had two very pretty daughters, one hardly out of her teens, but both accomplished coquettes. We had some difficulty in getting away from these ladies’ allurements, and only did so by promising to visit them after dinner, when there was to be a country dance at their house. My reader will understand from this that the most free-handed hospitality on all sides was extended to us.

Walking on through the principal street of the town, which was bordered on each side by large umbella, lime, and tamarind trees, thus affording a pleasant shade in the heat of the day, we passed by many fine houses, well whitewashed, clean, comfortable, and built of cut stone. In front of each was a large paved courtyard; and through the open gates of some we could

see the lady of the house sitting en déshabille, talking to her slaves, distributing their day’s subsistence, or examining the bundles of produce they had brought from the farms in the interior. In most places a puncheon of rum, with a cask of tobacco, stood open ready for trading; and the applicants for their morning draught were very numerous. Our host, who had accompanied us, appeared to be an object of universal respect, as no one passed him without a salute or humble greeting. Uncovering the shoulders is the mark of reverence from an inferior to a superior in Africa, and the words “My master” accompanied this movement.

We passed on through the upper town, till we reached the Castle of St. George del Mina; and, being admitted across the drawbridge by the sentry, who was clad in blue baft in place of the brick-dust shoddy in which our men were clothed, entered the castle. It was a fine, well-kept, spacious edifice, in pleasing contrast to the neglected state of our own fort at Cape Coast, which was then suffering under the rule of a colonial engineer, who, professing to be always at work at his estimates, never seemed to achieve anything but billiards and beer. The squabbles between the War Department and the Civil Government, too, helped this worthy in doing nothing for his pay, as both departments alternately claimed and repudiated the right of executing certain repairs. The Dutch guns, too, were in perfect order, whilst ours were honeycombed and useless.

The governor, Colonel Natglas, received us most cordially and kindly, as was his wont to all. He was a perfect gentleman and an excellent officer, his administration being most successful. Here again hospitality was the order of the day; and coffee time being over, seltzer and curaçoa were produced, both being perfect in quality. We did not despise the draught, however dangerous to our constitution.

Accepting an invitation to dinner for that day, we left the governor to his cares of office, which that day were to receive certain messengers from the King of Ashantee, who were bringing down recruits for the Dutch forces in Java and the Eastern Archipelago. For each of these his sable majesty received \$40 (£9); and the poor wretches were shipped off in a Dutch man-of-war that annually came to receive the supplies of soldiers. After a certain term

of years, these men were brought back to the coast; but all their ties were long since broken, even memories of former days perhaps obliterated, by the scenes and places they had visited during their exile. The policy of this was good and sound, though in the interests of humanity it cannot be admired.

We next visited Mr. Bartels' store, where some Ashantees were busy purchasing cloth, rum, powder, &c., for the King. They had brought down some two hundred ounces of gold to expend, and were therefore eligible parties to entertain. They struck me as being far superior to the Fantis in both physique and mind. Though living under such a savage and ruthless despotism, each man had a free, springy manner about him, different to the lazy, saucy indolence of the Coast nation. One peculiarity was very striking: each man wore his hair, or wool, in long, corkscrew-like ringlets, which were turning to a reddish-brown, and looked dirty. I preferred the black, short wool of the Fantis to this. Gold dust was the staple article of their commerce; and this, as being easily carried, was preferred by them, though they also had some magnificent elephants' tusks, one weighing upwards of 120 lbs.

They had brought as a present a couple of tiger skins, of great beauty; and they informed me that Ashantee, particularly near Ghofan, abounded in game. They were too intent on business to attend to me; and, as the day was getting hot, we walked leisurely back to our domicile, when in the verandah we found the individual of the smoking cap, and two or three fresh arrivals, still busy over the case of champagne. On our entry a fresh bottle was called for; and though at the risk of spoiling our appetites, which were keen and sharp, we had to join the morning revellers.

Surely Ireland and the West Coast have some affinity, for in both countries every rich man seems to have a host of needy relatives, who live in luxury at his expense, without caring to work, and devoid of any shame or scruples. Our entertainer soon made his appearance, having bagged the two hundred ounces from the Ashantees, which he considered a very fair morning's work, though now not to be got every day.

"Times are changed," he said, pointing to a picture of an old gentleman in a gorgeously embroidered uniform, with a huge

sabre, which he was caressing as a nurse might a baby. "In that old man's time, he would not open his store until one hundred ounces of gold were put down as a guarantee of purchase; for this he gave what he chose, and after that trade commenced."

Our breakfast was a never-ending affair, apparently, as relays of dishes came in, until I dreaded the next arrival. Venison cutlets and stews, with a soupçon of palm oil and dried fish, were too exquisite to be lightly dismissed; and a preparation of land crabs done up in their shells, though without bread crumbs, made one wish for the five stomachs of a camel, or the capacity of Dugald Dalgetty. Kickie, hot enough with pepper to reduce one to ashes, but still so exquisite that one must eat and be burnt; then a delicate fish done in palm oil; after that, mutton chops and asparagus; and then a huge turkey and ham were brought in. But we were not yet done. Oortolans and partridge finished the heavy part of our meal; and then fruits, with the dew cooled on them by a short stay in the refrigerator; coffee, and a host of liqueurs too numerous to mention, olives, and Burgundy of a rare flavour, wound up a meal such as I had never seen at a breakfast before, though I found it was not by any means uncommon at our entertainer's board. Our appetites had been taxed to the utmost, for during breakfast rare vintages had been plentifully supplied; and at length we hailed with relief a proposal to adjourn to the billiard-room, and there we passed the remainder of the hot part of the day. Whilst here an arrangement was made for a visit to the plantation and shooting lodge of Mr. Bartels, on the next day; but of this, the governor's dinner, and Mrs. Last's evening party, I must defer speaking till another occasion.

SIL DONNAGHAN THE PIPER.

CHAPTER V.

SIL IS BROUGHT BEFORE THE PUBLIC.

THE first person who crossed the threshold of the little shop at Windy Gap next morning happened to be Denis Dregan, and he was eagerly accosted by Sil.

"Did yez hear about the colonel?"

"That he was shot last night at Shaubhaile? iv coorse I did—and I heard that whin he druv through his lodge gate, and past the few cabins he's let stand, ivery dure was

shut, and there wasn't one to lind him a hand."

"But how is he, at all, Dinny—sure he's not dead?"

"Is it he dead? Not he. Bad min like him don't die so aisy. I seen Dr. Mara comin' along by the Coach and Horses, and I made bould to ax him how the ould fellow was, and he sez he thinks he'll over it. 'Twas a near shave; just half a nail more and he was done for. There's wan thing, the poor won't be the gladder for him if he does over it."

"And have they got the man as done it."

"Not as I heard. It was one of the bould Ribbon boys, they say."

And here came an expressive wink.

Just then a woman, with a cloak over her head, bare-armed and bare-legged, was heard battering at the door.

"Miss Flaherty, ma'am," she cried; "och, it's Mrs. Donnaghan I mane, I jest called in to say that there are two ov the polis comin' up the road."

"Two ov the polis," repeated Mrs. Donnaghan; "and what are they to quate, decent people like us?"

"They're comin' afther Sil—they want him to come along wid them."

At these words, Mrs. Donnaghan flung herself into a chair, and, throwing her apron over her head, began to rock herself to and fro.

"Och, my sorrow, och, my grief!" she cried; "and is it Sil they're wantin', and will they take Sil away from me?"

"Whisht, whisht, woman!" expostulated Sil; "shure I've done nothin', and how can they harm the likes ov me?"

The two policemen were now before the door: tall, stalwart men they were; so tall that they had to stoop head and shoulders before they could get into the little shop.

"Is Silvester Donnaghan here?"

"He is, sir."

"You must come along with me, the gentlemen at the court below are wanting you."

"Oh, jintlemen, jintlemen!" cried Gretta, rushing forward, "sure you won't take poor Sil away from me! He's as quate and peaceable a cratur as iver played the 'Boyne Water.' It's Dinny Dregan that comes in wid his prate about Cæsar and Rome; but Sil niver says a word. Take Dinny Dregan, jintlemen—take crooked Dinny; but, oh, lave me me poor Sil!"

"We'd be very glad indeed to take Dinny Dregan, my good woman—we know quite well that he is always disturbing the country; but he wasn't at Shaubhaile last night, and your husband was."

"It's only for a witness he's wanted," said the other policeman, a good-tempered looking giant; "so make your mind aisy, Mrs. Donnaghan, and he'll be back with you, may be, in a hour's time."

But Mrs. Donnaghan refused to be comforted, and rocked herself backwards and forwards in sore perturbation of spirit. All the fibres of her heart had twined themselves round the calm, serene piper, with his simple, quiet ways.

"Bad cess to crooked Dinny Dregan!" she cried; "it's all along ov him and Mick Flaherty that me poor Sil is taken from me. Bad cess to Dinny Dregan, and that he may niver know a quiet home!"

In the meanwhile, a regular cavalcade had set out from the Windy Gap. First, there were the two policemen conducting Sil; next came Dinny Dregan; then a group of women with their cloaks over their heads, vociferating as they went; then all the children of the national school, some waving green boughs and all agog with excitement. These, together with a few stragglers picked up on the way, and some cur dogs, who barked their very best, formed a tolerably numerous assemblage.

The two magistrates who were waiting at the little village court-house were not very formidable pillars of justice. The senior of the two—Mr. Harry Delmege—was a well-known fox hunter, who went over everything in splendid style. He was rather rubicund in face, and somewhat boisterous in manner, and had enough to do to assume an appropriately shocked air, as he whispered to his brother magistrate, Captain Sutcliffe, about the "shocking occurrence that had taken place last night." Captain Sutcliffe's mind, to tell the truth, was far more occupied with a great coursing match that was to take place shortly, at which he expected that his black and white dog, Punch, would be the principal winner; but at the entrance of Sil and his followers, both magistrates, ruddy Mr. Delmege and keen-eyed Captain Sutcliffe, assumed a rigid inquisitorial look, as much as to say, "You can't get over us." As for Sil, he had a lost bewildered air about him, as if he were walking in his sleep.

"Your name is Silvester Donnaghan, I believe?"

"It is, yer honour."

"I hear you've been lately married."

"I have sir—about a year back."

"Before we go farther, perhaps it's as well to tell you, Sil, that there is a reward of five hundred pounds offered to any one that can apprehend, or cause to be apprehended, the man that shot at Colonel Bennett last night. Five hundred pounds is a great deal of money, my man—it will buy plenty of feather beds and legs of mutton, and whisky galore, besides making you comfortable for life. So, I advise you, if you can throw any light on the matter, to do it at once. Think what it would be to bring five hundred yellow boys home to your wife."

Here Denis Dregan was observed to whisper something into Sil's ear.

"Turn that man out, constable," said Mr. Delmege—"turn that man out, instantly. What does he do here, disturbing the Court?"

"He's always disturbin' iverything," observed the constable, as he took crooked Dinny by the shoulders.

"It makes no difference to me, yer honour," said Sil, "whether he's here or not."

"I'm not so sure of that. However, to proceed with the inquiry. You were passing Shaubhaile cross-roads between nine and ten on the night of the 20th instant?"

"Is it last night, sir?"

"Yes, of course."

"I was passin' thim, yer honour, worse luck. Sure, I was comin' home from Knockcrea wid me pipes, tired and footsore afther a long day's playin'."

"And what did you see as you came to the turn?"

"The colonel's gig, yer honour—I know it by the great white horse as drives it."

"Nothing else? Didn't you see some one firing a shot?"

"Divil a wan, sir. Sure, yer honour knows I am a dark man."

"You're not dark with both eyes, you can see with one."

"I wish I could well, yer honour. I can just tell a tree from a horse, and that's the most I can do."

"Do you mean to tell me that if there was a crock of gold on the road, you couldn't see it?"

"Maybe I might, and maybe I mightn't.

It 'ud depend on what the crock was made ov."

"You can see plain enough what you want to see, I'll warrant. Come, now, don't you see me this minute?"

"Well, I can't say but I do, in a sort ov a mist, but who could help seeing such a fine, red-faced gentleman as yer honour? Sure, the two cheeks ov yez are for all the world like the full moon in harvest."

A suppressed giggle ran through the court, in which good-humoured Mr. Delmege could not help joining.

"And if you see me so well, why couldn't you see all that passed last night?"

"Isn't it broad daylight now? and thin there was only a weeny scrap ov a moon, and she behind a cloud. There's Pat Doolin, the coachman, 'll tell yez the same thing."

"You took down Pat Doolin's evidence in writing, didn't you, constable?" asked Mr. Delmege.

"I did, sir."

"Read it."

"That the sky was dark, and the moon had just gone in under a cloud, and that he was looking straight before him, for he was afraid the horse might stumble over the stones; and that he saw no one—man, woman, or child—except old Sil Donnaghan, who was walking quietly along the road, carrying his bagpipes."

"There!" cried Sil, triumphantly; "and if a gay young boy that has the two eyes in his head as sound as a bell couldn't see, isn't it quare to expect the likes ov me, that's a dark ould man, to do it?"

"Now, look here, Mr. Piper," said Captain Sutcliffe, taking up the inquiry, "can you swear that you know nothing whatever of this attempt on Colonel Bennett's life? Did you ever hear any talk of it among yourselves? Did you ever hear that it was projected or planned?"

"Upon my sacred oath, I niver did."

"You know that Colonel Bennett is not a man to be trifled with. He has great property, great influence; and, depend upon it, he will leave no stone unturned to hunt out everything about this affair."

"He may hunt as he likes. I don't know a ha'porth about it, no more than me own pipes at home."

"Come, now, if you saw the man that fired the shot there before you, couldn't you identify him, if you chose to do so?"

"What's idintify, yer honour?" asked the piper.

"Why, say who he was, and if it was he who fired at the Colonel last night."

"I niver saw a shot fired. I only hard thim go bang, bang, bang; and how was I to know who was at the bridge? Sure, I was all in a trimble for me own life. It's a lone place, yer honour, and there do be sperrits there."

"You're evading the question, Donna-ghan—you're evading the question," cried Mr. Delmege. "You're a cleverer fellow than I thought you were, but we don't want any such cleverness here. I'll just ask you one plain question, and I shall expect a plain answer. Think of the five hundred sovereigns, and how fine it would be to have them rattling in your pocket—why it would be a fortune to you. And now, did you, on your oath, see anybody last night at the Shaubhaile cross-roads besides Colonel Bennett and the coachman?"

Sil hesitated for a minute.

"I did not, yer honour," he answered at last, firmly and steadily.

The two magistrates conferred together for a time, and Sil was soon informed that for the present he was dismissed. As he went out of the court, Denis Dregan came behind him—

"Ye're one ov the right sort, Sil," he whispered; "sure, I knew yez had the blood ov the Donnaghans in yez, and that ye'd niver betray us."

Sil looked vaguely up, his knees seemed to be tottering under him.

"Dinny," he muttered, "I hope there's nothing wrong—the world isn't as big as whin I wint in."

"Not as big! sure, it's tin times bigger. Haven't ye saved the boy's life?"

"I couldn't tell agin him, Dinny."

"In course you couldn't. Who'd turn informer, except such bloody villyans as Reynolds and Newell and Armstrong? Who'd touch their dirty blood money? Let them have it themselves, and much good may it do them."

"Is he cotched, Dinny?"

"Who?"

"You know who."

"Not he. There's one of the polis inside that's swearin' he saw him jump a gap in the glin beyant at two o'clock this mornin', but they can't prove anything agin him. We'll bring him through, niver fear."

"He's own flesh and blood to the woman at home, Dinny."

"In coorse he is, and ye've stood to him like a man. Come in and take a drop; sure, they've bothered the life out of yez wid their questions."

Sil was never much of a drinker, but so much had to be told and heard that it was nearly three o'clock in the afternoon before he left the Coach and Horses. He was followed home by a rapturous, ragged, and appreciative crowd, who waved their green boughs in triumph at bringing him back safe and sound. But all the evening he sat almost in silence by the fire, and never even once asked for his pipes.

"I've tould a big lie," he said to himself; "but I'm that bothered that nothin' seems clear to me, and I'm not rightly sure that it was him I seen."

AMONGST ROGUES AND VAGABONDS.

"BEHIND the scenes, my dear? Ah, a terrible place—shockingly profigate! Dreadful old roués go there, and wicked young men; and the goings-on are horrible. Did I ever go behind the scenes? Ah, dear me, no! (Virtuous shudder.) How can you ask? I should as soon think of trying to stand on the brink of Tophet."

That is Mrs. Grundy; but Mrs. Grundy is not infallible. To argue with her, and tell her that nous avons changé tout cela, would be waste of breath; but you who read, and do not feel bound to take everything for granted, everything told you upon hearsay, take heed while we this tale unfold. First, though, in few words, let us tell you that the rogue and vagabond of the statute—to wit, the actor—is, as a rule, when off the stage a very ordinary being. His tinsel cast aside, he subsides into a man and a brother—a husband and a father, with children, and a garden at Camden Town, Kensington, or Brompton; buys bulbs in the autumn, flower-seeds in the spring. We know one who pulls a heavy iron roller over his gravel paths, and perspires profusely as he pushes a patent mower over his lawn—the lawn where, after an early dinner, he plays croquet with his wife and daughters. This rogue and vagabond—a very fair type, by the way, of your ordinary actor—is so much like a gentleman, that, unless you were told, you

would not know the difference. In fact, the actor's is now a profession followed, as is the legal or medical; the only difference being the preponderance of brain and efforts for advancement on the histrionic side, as opposed to the laws of old custom and routine upon the other. But open your eyes, and for awhile you shall stand on the other side of the curtain which rises and falls to the tune of the prompter's bell, and gaze upon the terrible real drama of profligacy there enacted.

Shall we call it the Varieties? Suppose we do; and on this rainy night in early spring we enter a door in a quiet Strand street, pass a knot of men in white canvas jackets, who look like engineers less the oil, and then we are stopped by a Cerberus.

No admission till we produce a note, when we are conducted along between what seem to be densely packed, old-fashioned carpet looms, lit by caged gaslights, till we stand in a little room, half office, half snuggerly, where upon a table lie some freshly written notices addressed to ballet dancers and orchestra, announcing a rehearsal at twelve o'clock the next day.

We do not play the spy to read them, for the word "Notice!" so to speak, takes our eyes into custody, and compels. In a minute—we are beneath the stage, so we must speak stagey—enter stage manager. He ought to be an overdressed, swearing, bullying man, with a red nose and fiery complexion, exhaling spirits at every breath; but he happens to be a quiet, gentlemanly personage in evening dress, who receives us courteously, and then, evidently in a subdued way proud of the place, takes us round, and up, and down. Are we ready? Certainly; and we follow, to encounter first a man with a tray, upon which, piping hot, and with an inviting look about the brown crust, a rumpsteak pie. Real? Oh, yes, certainly! There is a domestic drama in progress, founded by one Dickens, and in the piece there is a supper, during which the actors really feast. Pleasant realism this!

The pie passed, we walk behind our conductor, who points out the mysteries of the place; and now the looms assume the shape of ropes, and frames, and rollers, to raise or depress scenes, draw back grooves and traps, turn the stage generally from a floor of safety to a chaos of pitfall and peril. But we are to come here again when the extra-

vaganza is in progress; so for the present we prepare, after looking at a couple of iron tanks which contain oxygen, to ascend.

Here, upon a flight of steps, we encounter a posse of fairies, young and good-looking, in spangle, tight, and helmet; but they trip by us in the most unconcerned way possible, their scanty costume in no way suggestive of immodesty, and Smith, a friend with us—rather proud of his get-up and looks, by the way—seems quite put out at the nonchalant, business-like way with which they hasten to their dressing-rooms.

In another minute we are in "a wing," looking sideways at the scene in progress, listening to a well-known genial actor express a wish to "pinch Boxer's tail." Then comes a pleasant burst of laughter from the house, of which we catch a glimpse; and while all is glare here, there all seems misty and dull, for we are looking across the gas.

Close by where we now stand are certain handles, labelled "Sun," "Footlights," &c., &c., with which, in a moment, we can change from night to day, or back again, at the playwright's pleasure.

On one side are frames, covered with roughly daubed canvas, on the other is the bare brick wall; and as to the scene upon the stage, why it is about as pleasing to the eye as a frameless Turner's picture viewed edgewise. Upstairs, and we come to the flies, where more men in white canvas jackets are about, apparently preparing to set sail, for, rope in hand, they are getting ready to haul in slack, to take a pull or two at the weather ear-rings, and tighten up sheet; but they are not sails they have to deal with, only skies and clouds; and this is not the rail of the quarter-deck. We are only looking down upon the stage from amidst hanging scenes innumerable. Now and then we get a glimpse of the audience, and the scene being enacted, but it is in a topsy-turvy way, and it is only the faintly heard music that sounds correctly.

Another few steps and we are in the scene-painters' room, where a couple of men in blouses stand before some stretched canvas, making dabs and dashes with dirty colours. A patch, that looks as if a giant had dipped a Brobdingnagian sponge in mud, and then hurled it against the wall, is, we are told, a tree; and as we turn away, we, who have dwelt upon foreshortening and chalkiness at the Academy, and put it

in print, declare that either the scene-painter does not know his business or we know nothing about it. Conscience suggests the latter, and conscience is generally right; for scenes are painted, as Smith observes, "to look a long way off at a great distance."

About an hour has passed, the curtain is down, and for a few minutes there is a little bustle—no confusion. The men in white jackets have run here and there with scenery, and, in less time than seems possible, we have a scene in Japan. The gas blazes around hotly; men stationed in the galleries above are ready with their apparatus to cast the sunny glories of the lime-light upon the proceedings; actresses are gathering here and there, ready for their parts, all quietly, decorously, and in order. The curtain rises, and the piece commences, proceeds, changes and counterchanges, and again and again actors, chorus singers, and ballet girls come and go to stage or dressing-room, to return, now all gorgeous in the scanty garments that lately scandalized the Lord Chamberlain. Why? To the pure all things are pure. Winwood Reade tells us that it is an utter mistake to imagine that the nude black forms of the African maidens were suggestive of indecency. Native modesty was there, and sufficient. While here, with the ballet girls, waiting their turn to go upon the stage, it is pleasurable to see the freedom from restraint with which they gather together, chatting pleasantly, as girls will chat, apparently ignorant—custom armed—of the fact that they are dressed differently from any one else. The terrible old men are not here, neither the young swells. All goes on quietly, methodically, business-like, and mostly in obedience to the silence-inculcating notices upon the walls. If this resembles Tophet, Tophet must be a very orderly routine-regulated place, and its inhabitants uncommonly like people who do something for a livelihood. Certainly the damsels are pretty, which can hardly be classed as an offence, and two or three are laughing merrily over the antics of a puppy (*canis vulgaris*), evidently presented to one of them. Converse? Oh, yes, they are ready to talk unconstrainedly enough; but somehow—they ought to be, of course—they do not seem to be a set of the dreadfully abandoned hussies suggested by Mrs. Grundy. In fact, so much are they like other common beings, that they dread the

small-pox, and one asks another whether her "vaccination has taken."

And still the piece proceeds, with music, dance, and merry gag. Loud plaudits come from time to time as, lithe and elastic, and flashing of limb in her supple grace, a leading, very popular actress bounds from side to side of the stage, bringing the house down again and again with quip, pun, and repartee. She takes male characters, and surely Mrs. Grundy's glowing face must here retire behind her quivering fan. What will she say, then, when we tell her that our little actress is a married lady, an amiable little wife, domestic, and the mother of children? Somehow, as we go behind scene after scene, the only dreadful thing we encounter is the dreadful matter-of-fact, business-like tinge of all we see. The gorgeous arcades are only painted canvas; the rocks and verdant herbage, wood and chaff, illumined by oxygen lights and glowing lime. But a signal is given us, and we descend from the heat and glare of the stage to below, where we stand and move amongst the great pleasure-weaving looms, rollers, and cords. It is dim, in comparison, here; but we can plainly see four men draw up by pulleys to the ceiling to us—floor of the stage to those above—what seems to be a stoutly made stump child's crib, containing a thick straw bed. "Crash!" the ceiling parts, and a figure falls through on to the bed—a fearful depth of fully six inches. The four men make springs of their arms, and rapidly slacken the ropes, and the crib with its burden descends, and an actress steps out and seeks her dressing-room. The crib is drawn up again to the ceiling. "Crash!" And this figure, that has taken the sensation header, falls through, and is lowered, and then away go all to draw up from beneath, or lower down from above, a fresh scene.

After a time there is more of this machine business to be seen; but this is the reverse: here the actor—demon or sprite—stands upon a small stout frame, and at the given signal the weights and the muscles of strong men's arms combine to make a force which shoots the demon with a bang six, eight, or ten feet above the stage, through the segment-hinged hole known professionally as the "vampire trap." Again and again we see him reappear, rolled to us from the ceiling, to be shot—a human bolt from a catapult—into the sight of the spectators,

to leap, bound, and contort himself before coming once more to the side of the house, perspiring, panting, and with a tendency on the part of the hideous paint to rub off largely.

This is the property-room, where are kept the odds and ends used in a piece—the tycoon's umbrella, the lady's fan, the artificial flowers. This the wardrobe, where thousands of pounds are spent in silk, satin, and velvet. But enough: the heat here is stifling; those footlights glare upon us from their reflectors with a glow that is almost tropical; and after a glance once more at the quiet and serious, well-ordered, business-like scene behind the scenes, we thank our conductor, and say "Good night."

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XXV.

AT length, just two months after the death of Woodward's little boy, Mr. Dobbie announced to me in the surgery one morning that Sir John and Miss Middleton had arrived in London, and had telegraphed to him to prepare Ardmore House for their reception at once, as it was their intention to spend some time there in retirement.

My friend the vicar was present. He generally looked in to lend me a helping hand on dispensing days; for the short acquaintance he had made with medicine previous to his illness had familiarised him with the art of mixing potions and compounding pills, in which latter part of the business he was an adept. It was a part of my duties which I disliked, but which he seemed to revel in; so that I was glad of his assistance, which he was only too well pleased to give.

Mr. Dobbie was very much excited.

"I maun rin awa to the house," he exclaimed, talking broad Scotch, "and tell the housekeeper, and telegraph to M'Dougall in Belfast to send down their men, for the place is no fit for a man to live in. It never was much in Sir Stewart's time, but noo it's clean gone to ruin."

"When do they arrive?" I asked.

"He says this day week," replied the agent; "but I maun write and tell him it will no be possible to red up the place in that time, and he maun bide a month in London."

Charles had turned very pale when he heard the news.

"They are very great people, I can tell you," he said to Mr. Dobbie; "and unless they're very much changed, won't like to put up with anything rough—the daughter especially."

"Do you tell me sae?" helplessly ejaculated Mr. Dobbie.

"Ay, ay," replied the vicar, imitating so exactly the agent's voice and manner that I trembled lest that gentleman should perceive that he was being made game of; but fortunately he was too much excited to notice anything; and, after muttering "Hm! hm!" and "Ay, ay," after his usual manner, he wished us "Guid morning," and rushed off to write his letters and despatch his telegrams.

"This is pretty news!" presently remarked my friend.

"What is?" I asked; for, in listening to the oft-told tale of an old woman's ailments, I had forgotten all about Sir John and his impending arrival.

"Nothing," snapped the vicar. "You never listen to a word I say."

"My dear fellow, I can't possibly attend to two things at the same time. I was trying to make out old Peggy Murneen's account of her infirmities, and what it is she wants. Have you any idea what are 'asserferrits'? I confess I cannot make it out."

"Asafoetida, of course," replied the vicar, scornfully. "You ought to go to school again."

"All very well for you to talk, vicar," I replied, good-humouredly; "they're your country folk, or you wouldn't understand their lingo a bit better than I do."

"You're a Hottentot."

"What news was it you were calling pretty?"

"Those Middletons coming here."

"Well, as far as I remember them, they are very pleasant people—at least, he is. I dined with them in Collins-street years ago. Miss Middleton I have never seen since. She was quite a child."

"She's a beauty—that's what she is," sneered the vicar; "and has a partiality for niggers, I am told."

"You surprise me."

"Do I? Take care you're not surprised a bit more yet, old chap."

"What by?"

"Patience, my friend. Time will tell, I dare say."

"I thought you knew them very well, Charley."

"I believe I thought I did, at one time."

"I thought you did. Why, I understood you to say you had lived at their house for some considerable time."

"So I did. I was their servant for three months; but you might have spared me the humiliation of once more admitting it. I wish I had died first."

"Come, come, Charles, something has vexed you—you are not yourself this morning."

"Am I not, by Jove! You are quite mistaken, my friend. I feel that I am getting more and more myself every day; and, in one sense, I am sorry for it. But there, no doubt it is to be!"

"What is?"

"Nothing."

"Well, Betty," I said, turning to a woman who had come into the room upon old Peggy's departure with her "asserferrets," "and what do you want this morning?"

"Nothing at all, doctor, jewel," she replied, "barrin' a few barks to give me an appetite for me bit o' vittles."

"Are you going?" I cried out after my friend, who had put on his hat, and was making for the door.

"Yes, you don't want me here, and I have some letters to write."

Clearly something had put the vicar out; but I was not prepared for the intelligence that awaited me later in the day, when he informed me that he had written to the Bishop of Highshire, tendering his resignation as vicar of Dumfernaghalee.

"What on earth has tempted you to do so mad a thing?" I asked.

"I cannot meet her," he replied with a shudder.

"Meet whom? Not Miss Middleton, surely?"

"That is the lady."

"And you call yourself a man, my friend?"

"That is exactly the reason why I must go."

"My dear fellow, you have taken leave of your senses."

"I dare say I have: if I ever had any, which I begin to think is questionable."

"What are you going to do?"

"Nothing. I have plenty to live on.

Possibly I may go up to London, and devote myself to literature."

"Charles, you are certainly mad."

"I have no doubt you are quite right, friend. I more than half suspect I am myself."

"Why should you be afraid of meeting Miss Middleton? You told me long ago you had quite ceased to care about her."

"Did I?"

"Undoubtedly you did."

"Never mind: it wasn't the first lie by a few hundreds I have told in my time; and I dare swear it won't be the last."

"Charles!"

"It is too late now, at all events. I have posted my letter to the bishop, and must abide by his decision."

"He will not accept your resignation."

"So much the worse, if he don't; I shall then have no alternative but to run away, and leave the parish to take care of itself. I cannot live in the same country as that infernal woman."

"What nonsense, man! What harm did she ever do to you?"

"She made me make a confounded idiot of myself."

"It was not her fault, Charley, if you did stultify yourself; and making a fool of yourself a second time on her account won't mend matters, that I can see."

"Very likely; but my mind is made up."

Possibly it may have been, or he may have thought so; but, in the course of a few days, when a letter arrived from the bishop condoling with my friend on his recent loss, which it seems he had pleaded as an excuse for giving up the living, and asking him to reconsider his determination, he replied that he had done so, and would, with his lordship's permission, remain at Dumfernaghalee for the present.

Sir John Middleton replied by return of post to Mr. Dobbie's letter, that he intended leaving London on the following day; and requested him, if Ardmore House were not ready for their reception, to engage rooms for himself and suite at the hotel.

Poor Mr. Dobbie! I never saw any one so flustered in my life.

"Guid save us!" he exclaimed when I had read the baronet's letter. "It's fit to drive a mon daft. The hotel! he little kens what like a place it is. Na, na, I'll e'en mak the wife gie up her room to the young leddy. Sir John can tak the spare room."

"I daur say, doctor, you'll no object to gie us a shak doon at your house?"

"With pleasure," I replied; "but unless Sir John is very much altered, he will not be as hard to please as you imagine. He has roughed it a good deal in his time, I know, and won't mind everything not being quite straight just at first."

"Ay, ay," replied the agent, hurrying away. "I maun gae and see what's to be done."

As I had expected he would, the baronet peremptorily refused to permit his agent to turn out of his own house for him, and made himself quite comfortable at the hotel, after seeing his daughter and her maid installed in Mrs. Dobbie's spare room.

The day and hour of their arrival had been kept a strict secret; as Sir John, owing to his recent bereavement, wished to take possession of his estates in as quiet and unostentatious a manner as possible, and especially to avoid the excitement of a public reception. He would not even permit Mr. Dobbie to meet him at the railway station at Banntown.

His wishes were carried out to the letter; and when the two cars which conveyed the baronet and his daughter, their luggage and servants, drew up at the agent's door, not one of the villagers had the slightest inkling as to who the strangers were.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE next was one of my dispensing days; and as I was engaged ministering to the wants of my patients, Mr. Dobbie walked in with a gentleman whom he introduced as "Sir John."

I should have known the baronet anywhere, although I had not seen him for years. He was very little altered—older-looking, perhaps, grey-haired, but as upright as ever, as fresh-coloured, as frank and open in his manner, and as pleasant as of old.

"How do you do, doctor?" he exclaimed, advancing towards me, and holding out his hand, which I took, returning his genial pressure with satisfaction. It was like meeting an old friend in a land of strangers—a land of strangers still, though I had lived in it seven years.

"I should not have known you," remarked Sir John, as he released my hand; "and yet you have a great look of your father, too. You were almost, if not quite, his last thought."

"Poor father!" I exclaimed with emotion, as the recollection of my vision flashed across my mind.

"Rich, you should say," corrected Sir John. "He rests from his labours, and his works have followed him. There is not a more honoured name in the colony. How do you like this country, and how do they treat you here?"

"Very well," I replied, answering both questions at the same time. "It is a beautiful spot, and the people are all as kind as they can be."

"That's right," replied the baronet. "You must introduce me to your wife and children."

Our second was only six weeks old.

"With pleasure. Emma will be delighted. How did you know I was married?"

"Mr. Dobbie and I had a long chat last night, when he posted me up in all the news of the neighbourhood. He says I must offer myself for the county at the next election, which is to be in six months; but I don't seem to care much about it. I never would allow myself to be put in nomination for the colonial legislature, and I don't fancy there is much difference."

"It is a duty you owe to yourself and us, Sir John," interposed Mr. Dobbie. "The Middletons have always held one, at least, of the seats. Sir Stewart was our member when he died; and Mr. Douglas, who succeeded him, is not liked, and has not the least chance of being elected again. He is too much of a Radical to please the good people about here."

"A Radical!" exclaimed the baronet. "Why, that's exactly what I am myself."

"You, Sir John!" cried the agent, in amaze. "A Middleton a Radical!"

"Why not?" queried the baronet. "I was not nursed in view of succeeding to the property."

"Surely you do not support the disestablishment scheme, Sir John?"

"Most decidedly I do. I am a Dissenter myself, and would freely concede the right of free thought and worship to all."

"Not the Romanists?"

"Certainly. I draw the line nowhere."

Mr. Dobbie made no reply. Probably he was reflecting that the opinions he had hitherto held, partly in deference to his late employer, would bear some modifying, and perhaps he was not far wrong.

"You will think better of it, Sir John," I said, referring to his expected candidature.

"Well, well," he replied, "perhaps I may; but there is time enough yet, at all events, to consider all about it. In the meantime, I must get you to see my daughter, who is not very well this morning."

"Nothing serious, I hope."

"No, I think not: fatigued by our journey of yesterday, I fancy."

"I will go to her at once."

"No, no—time enough when you have finished with the good people here. I like the smell of your drugs: it quite puts me in mind of old times."

"I should say you were not sorry to have done with them, Sir John."

"I don't know," he replied, with a half-sigh. "At all events, I shall be glad to lend you a helping hand whenever you may require it here. Use is second nature, and I can't shake off the old associations all at once. I fancy I was of some use to the surgeon of our ship on the way home."

"Indeed."

"Yes. I don't wish to appear egotistical, and shall not tell you the story now. I find I am not a stranger here, after all. The vicar, I hear, is quite an old friend."

"So he has told me," I replied; "and what a pleasant time he spent with you at Tara."

The baronet sighed, whether with regret at the thought of his beautiful place on the banks of the Happy Creek or not, I could not say; but he presently went on—

"He was always a strange fellow, was Charles Woodward; but I must confess I was not prepared to find myself one of his parishioners on my return to Ireland. I thought the Church was about the last profession he would have chosen."

I thought so too, but did not say so; and the baronet continued—

"I hope he makes a good clergyman."

"He is very active in visiting among the poor, and his preaching is very popular. He does all the duty himself, and declines the assistance of a curate."

"So Mr. Dobbie told me. Well, I am glad to hear so good an account of him; but I was very sorry to hear that he has just lost his only child. I hope he has a good wife."

"Most excellent."

"I am glad to hear that. I am sure he is a good husband."

He was not, by any means, but I could not say so.

Sir John continued:

"I once fancied he was attached to some one I know, but I must have been mistaken."

I was just on the point of saying, "No, Sir John, you were quite right in your surmise," but I did not. I wish I had. Things might have been, must have been, very different if I had. But how could I tell?

"Was it a love match, or had the lady money?" inquired the baronet.

"She had no money," I replied.

"Well, well," exclaimed Sir John, "there is no accounting for taste, it is said. And if we want a precedent, there was the great lexicographer married a woman old enough to be his mother, and loved her very heartily."

"True," I answered, not knowing what else to say; "at least, so I have read."

"Well, good-bye to the present, doctor. I must go and pay my respects to the vicar; and when you have concluded your labours here, you will not forget to see my daughter, who declined my services, and desired me to send for you."

"I shall be disengaged in about twenty minutes, Sir John, and will then call upon Miss Middleton."

Before I had left the dispensary, however, the baronet returned with his agent.

"It is very strange," exclaimed the former, speaking to the latter. "You say he knew we arrived last night, Mr. Dobbie?"

"Yes," replied that gentleman—"he knew it, for I sent him word of your being here, thinking he would be glad to have an early opportunity of renewing the acquaintance."

"Very strange," again exclaimed the baronet, turning to me. "Did you know, doctor, that the vicar was going to Dublin this morning?"

"No," I replied, "he never told me anything about it."

"Well, he drove into Pennyletter this morning, and the car has not yet come back."

"Did you see Mrs. Woodward?"

"No. She sent down word that she did not feel well enough to receive strangers."

"It is curious," I replied. "I know Charley does queer things at times, and takes sudden notions into his head; but I had no idea he was going away this morn-

ing. Did you hear when he was expected home again?"

"No," said the agent. "I asked, but Margery did not know—the master hadn't left any word."

"Some business call," I ventured to say. "I know he dabbles in stocks and shares, and may have had a message from his stockbroker requiring his presence in town."

"Hum!—possibly," said the baronet; "but it looks like avoiding me—us."

So it did; but I endeavoured to dissuade him from thinking so—with, I fancy, but in different success.

"Well, well," exclaimed Sir John, when I had said all I had to say on the subject, "you have done here now—come and see my daughter."

I went, and was introduced:

"Dr. Cochrane—Miss Middleton."

The young lady—she was about twenty-eight—rose from the sofa upon which she had been sitting in Mrs. Dobbie's drawing-room, and advanced a step towards me, holding out her hand.

I was quite taken aback, and almost lost my presence of mind. In all my life, I had never seen so magnificent a woman.

She was dressed in black, of course, and I have been given to understand that her costume was by no means in accordance with etiquette or custom, for she was in mourning for her mother; but I cannot help or alter facts, which I am bound to record as I find them.

Black velvet draped in ample folds her queen-like figure, for she was tall—too tall for a woman, some envious fair ones said, but they were in the wrong—she was tall, but perfectly proportioned; for, although there was not one angle in her entire frame, hers was by no means an excess of embonpoint. Rich crape fringed the open sleeves of her dress, and made her arms look white by contrast. She wore no jewellery, except a pair of jet earrings, and a simple mourning ring; and her dark brown hair was gathered in luxuriant coils around her classic head. Her complexion was dark, but far from sallow; while her full eyes were grey. Her lips were moist and ruddy, slightly compressed, but not too thin. Her nose was of the Grecian type, but so harmonized with, or was eclipsed by, the surrounding features, that one did not notice it at first. Her ears were small and finely shaped; and her teeth, when she spoke, I saw were white and

regular. Her throat was full, and her face a perfect oval. She might have sat for a picture of the Egyptian queen, and would have looked every inch a Cleopatra.

She held out her hand, which I took respectfully, as I inclined my head over it, in homage to her resplendent beauty.

"I dare say you remember me—I recollect you perfectly." And when she spoke, somehow the magic spell of her loveliness was dissolved, and I became fully conscious of the fact, of which I had become temporarily oblivious, that I stood in no more than the presence of a woman.

Not that her voice was by any means either harsh or disagreeable; but there was something wanting in the intonation, the absence of which seemed to shock my sense of hearing, and detracted sadly from the charm of her presence: perhaps it was softness, perhaps it was feminine grace she lacked; for she spoke in a decided manner, not to say abrupt, like one accustomed to give orders, and to be implicitly obeyed.

"Do I look very ill?" she then asked, fixing me for a moment with her full grey eyes, which she immediately dropped down to my feet, where they remained during the rest of the interview, except when she occasionally looked over my head.

"Do I look very ill?"

"No, Miss Middleton," I replied, "you do not; how do you feel?"

"Pretty well," she replied—"a little tired, but not much. Papa insisted upon sending for you, and to avoid trouble I let him do so; but I request you will not order me anything—if you do, I tell you plainly, I shall not take it."

"Nothing like candour."

"Do you think so? Have you lived here long? What an out of the way place it is. You who are an Australian, how can you endure to live in it? There, don't attempt to answer me—I never listen to any one. You want to see my tongue, and feel my pulse, I dare say."

Here she protruded the organ in question, and held out her rounded wrist, which latter I touched with the tip of my finger for an instant, when she withdrew it with a jerk.

"Nothing wrong there," she said.

"No," I replied, smiling, "as regular as possible."

"What are you laughing at?"

"Pardon me, Miss Middleton," I replied, "I am not laughing."

"Never mind; you have an old friend—acquaintance, I should say—of ours, living here, I find?"

"The rector?—yes. You knew him in Melbourne, I believe."

"So I thought; but it seems we were mistaken. He's a fool."

"Peculiar, but by no means a fool."

"He is a fool," she went on, unheeding my rebuke, "else why should he have run away, and left a fortune behind him?"

"Some misconception," I replied.

"Very likely," said the lady, tossing her head in a scornful manner. "Le Burgh is a millionaire by this time; so would he have been if he had not been a downright idiot."

"Money is not everything, Miss Middleton."

"I agree with you there: but he showed his folly even more palpably in other matters."

"Indeed!"

I knew, or thought I knew, to what she alluded, and wished to see how far she would go; but she recollected herself, and continued—

"But, there, it is no business of mine, Mr. Cochrane. By the way, you must not expect me to call you 'doctor,' it is a word I detest—it is no business of mine; but I have no patience with a wilful idiot, whether male or female."

I could not make up my mind what reply to make.

TABLE TALK.

A BOOK advertisement is now appearing in the daily papers which sets us looking at the date, to see whether we are not labouring under a mistake, or been Rip Van Winkleising for a hundred years or so. Here is the advertisement almost in its entirety:—"Royal 18mo, cloth, 2s. Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia, by Samuel Johnson, LL.D., with an introduction by James Boswell." However, it is not surprising, for we are harking back to all the old works. Before long, perhaps, we shall have "Pamela" and Mrs. Radcliffe. How would the latter's ghosts and subterranean passages read now?

A GERMAN WRITER has been falling foul of the absurdities of English pronunciation—certainly a subject full of hitches, though he has not got hold of the right kink. Possibly he had been going through too severe a

course of pipes and books for the good of his intellect, or maybe his spectacles were not clear. By the way, why do all German students wear glasses? Our friend says that the absurdity of our pronunciation is well shown in the case of the word "Boz," which is pronounced "Dickens." Well, we live and learn!

ONE DOES NOT look as a rule to scientific men for sentiment—they are too fond of knocking their readers down with a title, and then battering them with hard words; but Professor Wyville Thomson, leader of the Challenger expedition for dredging the deep oceans of our planet, is able to paint with his pen. Here are his words depicting the scenes in the circle of his observation:—"Sunday was a lovely day. The breeze had fallen off somewhat, and the force was now only from 2 to 3. The sky and sea were gloriously blue, with here and there a soft grey tress on the sky, and a gleaming white curl on the sea. A pretty little Spanish brigantine, bright with green paint and white sails, and the merry, dusky faces of three or four Spanish girls, came in the morning within speaking distance and got her longitude. She had been passing and repassing us for a couple of days, wondering, doubtless, at the irrelevancy of our movements, shortening sail, and stopping every now and then in mid-ocean with a fine breeze in our favour. On Monday morning we parted from our gay little companion. We stopped again to dredge, and she got far before us; and we saw with some regret first her green hull and then her white sails pass down over the edge of the world."

AN AMERICAN PRINTER tells how, nearly fifty years ago, a little pale-faced man came into the Vermont printing office where he was learning his trade, and, handing him a printed slip, said, "My lad, when you use these words spell them as here—theater, center," &c. It was Noah Webster, travelling on foot and visiting country printing offices to persuade people to spell as he did.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C. The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 296.

August 30, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XX.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.



H, how nice it must be to be a beast!

Of course, when one says this, one does not mean a nasty beast, but a nice beast.

Now, by a nice beast, I mean a horse. All the same, though, it would not be very satisfactory to be a horse. If

he be the property of the well-to-do, he gets groomed and doctored too much, is over-driven or over-ridden, or kept standing in the cold, draughty streets. And if he be the very own of the ill-to-do—poor wretch! I need say no more to people who know the fate of the British horse as he slowly descends in the scale of misfortune, from the carriage to the cab, street cart, costermonger, knacker's yard, cats'-meat barrow.

No, I should not like to be a horse—but say one of the smooth, sleek, striped or spotted, glossy-coated creatures of the feline race, who curl up to sleep; wake up, shake themselves, go in the warm sun, and give themselves a lick down, and they are clean. Or stop—no—better still a squirrel, for he carries his own blanket or quilt, and curls up warm and snug when he goes to sleep.

One thinks all this on account of the troubles of dress, and the time given to so unsatisfactory a performance. Dressing or undressing, what a time it takes; and, after

all said and done, what an unpleasant hour that is before getting into bed. Now, were one a beast, there would be only the quiet curl up and sleep; but, with the "human warious," what a deal there is to do!

To begin with: it is late, and after a busy day, whether of work or play, one is tired. Then, as a matter of course, if one is tired, one (perhaps two!) is cross, and up come all sorts of troubles for discussion;—if you are single, for discussion with your conscience; if you are married, with your wife or husband. And—confound them!—these little troubles will not come in their ordinary guise. If it were morning, they would be dressed in the garments given by a mind at rest, and the brightness of the day; but at night they troop in black and ghostly, with an aspect that is chilling, without their being taken to pieces one by one.

Ah, that last hour before going to bed is not a pleasant one. Conscience or your wife is too chatty, and reminds you too strongly of your debts. He was a wise ancestor who invented that pleasant glass called a nightcap—evidently as a pleasant play upon words, for what the term should be is extinguisher, a putter-out or smotherer of carking cares that infest you, and will not fold their tents, like the Arabs, nor as silently steal away.

It was in this last hour—precisely the same one as that which had filled poor Marie Rivière so full of trouble—that a similar conversation was taking place in two neighbouring apartments—to wit, in Lady Lawler's bed-room and Sir Richard's dressing-room, the door of communication being open, and the remarks sent flying to and fro.

They had come upstairs in anything but an amiable frame of mind—Lady Lawler first, and Sir Richard after staying to smoke a cigar to settle his nerves, but without the desired effect.

"Humph! Not in bed yet?" was the

commencement from Sir Richard, as he set down his candlestick and engaged in a battle with his bootjack, which ended in sundry evil wishes being hurled at the boot-maker, consequent upon the white leather lining of Sir Richard's patent boot catching his heel, and being drawn right out, and refusing to be kicked away.

"No," said Lady Lawler, coldly—"I'm not in bed yet, Dick."

"Humph! so I see."

Then there was a silence of a few moments' duration, during which the baronet installed himself in his dressing gown, and pettishly threw coat in one direction, vest in another.

"Who the devil's been taking my soap?" he roared the next minute.

"I have, Dick," said her ladyship, coolly. "You can have mine. I don't like the brown Windsor."

"Bring it here, then," said Dick, sulkily. "Wish to goodness you wouldn't be so fond of—"

"Can't, dear," murmured her ladyship, evidently speaking with hair pins in her lips, and her chin bent low over her breast. "My hair's down. That stupid girl!"

Dick did not stop to hear any more, but stamped heavily into the next room, snatched the soap from the dish, and knocked the lid from the marble top into a footpan, where it was smashed to atoms.

Perhaps it is as well not to note down the ejaculation uttered by Sir Richard Lawler, Bart., apropos of all soap dishes. Lady Lawler, however, said—

"Tut! tut! tut! And that service is so hard to match!"

"No business to take my soap," was growled from the dressing-room; while, evidently moved by vanity, her ladyship shook down the whole mass of her loosened hair that had been so carefully pinned up half an hour before by her maid, and sat looking at herself in the broad glass, drawing the tawny tresses now this way, now that, and ending by smiling as if pleased with some thought which played through her imagination.

The silence took the attention of Sir Richard, who now appeared at the door crowned with a brush, which his right hand held in position.

"That's pretty!" he growled. "How much longer are you going to keep on with that foolery?"

Lady Lawler's reply took the form of a grimace, which she gave him from amidst her veil of hair, reflected in the glass.

Sir Richard saw it, growled thunderously, returned to his own glass, and then sent a malicious bolt at his wife by asking, in a sneering, petulant voice, whether she had had enough French for one evening.

"I wish, Dick, that you would not be such a bear," was the reply. "You were quite rude to poor Monsieur Rivière this evening. Poor, dear little man! You'll frighten them away with your brusqueness, if you don't mind."

"I only wish I could," he growled, and there was the sound of a brush being banged down on his table.

"I don't," was the cool reply.

"I'm sick of them," said Sir Richard. "The very servants are talking about them—I'm sure of it."

"Very likely," said Lady Lawler, quietly. "Poor things, they must have something to talk about, so why not that?"

"Humph!"

"They're not like you, Dick," said Lady Lawler, maliciously—"with your brain stored with a thousand subjects ready to afford you enjoyment."

"That's right—sneer away!" he exclaimed.

"Then what has the servants' conversation got to do with us? Are we to model ourselves to please them?"

"I tell you," exclaimed Sir Richard, who was not ready with a reply—"I tell you, I'm sick of it. I hate their French ways, these Rivières. I wish we had never seen them."

"Then it is most ungrateful, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself—speaking like that after their behaviour to you in Paris!"

"Well, that's paid for now, at all events," grumbled Sir Richard. "If not, for goodness' sake let them have money, and go."

"Money!" said Lady Lawler, contemptuously. "Money—always money! Just as if they would take money! You seem to think that money will pay for or buy anything."

"So it will," he grumbled.

"No, it will not," said she, tartly. "Money! and to a gentleman of Monsieur Rivière's sensitiveness and polish. Ah, Richard, I wish you were more like him."

There was a crash here, and the splinter-

ing up of a little china cold cream pot—for Sir Richard Lawler was applying a little of the soft unguent to a crack or chap upon his lip when his lady made the above remark, one which startled him so that he dropped the little pot, and stood for a few moments choking with wrath.

Was he mad—drunk—dreaming? Did he hear aright? Wish he were more like Rivière!—that wretched, scurvy little Frenchman!—he, Sir Richard Lawler, five feet eleven in his boots—a man all muscle and strength, who used to pull stroke in his college eight, though he was ploughed for smalls—a baronet of a good old Norman family—wish he were more like that shabby, little, beggarly exile! Pooh! it was ludicrous!

He laughed aloud: at least, he gave utterance to a noise that was meant for a laugh, but bore about as much resemblance to it as the sardonic bray of the melodramatic villain in a transpontine play. So discordant and strange was the noise, that, coming as it did close upon the breakage, Lady Lawler was startled, and hurried to the door.

"What is the matter, Richard?"

"Matter!" he exclaimed. "Oh, nothing—nothing whatever. Pray go back. I was only a little amused. But I think you said that money might offend Monsieur Rivière."

"Of course it would," said her ladyship, slowly returning to her seat, but watching her husband curiously the while. "I'm sure you'll offend him some day with your rudeness."

"Some day? How much longer are they going to stay, then? Haven't you had enough French yet?"

"As to how much longer they are going to stay, I cannot give you an answer; but certainly not long, for monsieur is too proud a gentleman to remain under obligations to any one. But with respect to my having had enough French, I think there could be no better opportunity for improving one's accent and gaining conversational ease; so I have made arrangements with Monsieur Rivière to give me a long course of lessons."

"What?" roared Sir Richard.

"I have made arrangements with Monsieur Rivière to give me a long course of lessons."

"To—give—you—you—my wife—lessons?"

"Yes—to—give—me—me—your wife—lessons," retorted Lady Lawler, in a higher

key. "Pray, what is there extraordinary in that? And I'm sure that a course would do you good, Richard; and a few in politeness as well."

"I'm—"

"What do you say?" cried her ladyship, cutting him short. "I'm sure nothing could be better. Monsieur Rivière tells me that he finds it necessary, on account of his present income being so small, to give lessons in his native tongue; and he wishes us to give him a few introductions to people whom we know."

"And we shall do nothing of the kind," said Sir Richard, firmly.

"Yes, you will," said her ladyship, calmly, as she passed a great ivory-backed brush through her long hair.

"And what is more," exclaimed Sir Richard, now very wroth, as he stood framed in the doorway, and also brush-armed, but with a pair which he had been applying to his head—"and what is more, I forbid you to take these lessons. It is preposterous—it is absurd—it—it—it's indecent," he exclaimed, brushing his head furiously.

"And why? Why?" she exclaimed as angrily, a couple of red spots beginning to glow in her milky cheeks. "What do you mean, sir? Please have the goodness to explain."

"There's no explanation needed, madame," he exclaimed, brushing away till the tears stood in his eyes. "I have said that I will not allow it, and I will not."

"Oh, indeed," exclaimed Lady Lawler, standing up, and turning to face him for a moment, with flashing eyes. And, certainly, as she stood there, in her long white robe, and wild, dishevelled hair, she looked very beautiful; and in spite of his height, Sir Richard, whose attire was not becoming, and whose hair was brushed down over his forehead, looked something approaching to the contemptible.

Possibly he knew that he stood at a disadvantage, for he certainly winced beneath his lady's gaze; and she quietly turned and repeated herself, saying—

"I have told monsieur that I will assist his wishes by taking lessons of him, and I shall take them—as many as I please."

And she sat back gazing into her mirror—not at herself, but at the angry reflected visage of her husband, who stood with ruffled hair and half-raised brushes, ready to speak, but with the words refusing to come.

He, too, could see the face reflected in the long glass, and probably felt how ineffective was his appearance; but his anger grew hotter as he saw the face of his wife soften, till it was radiant with a merry smile, as she exclaimed—

“Oh, Dick, what a guy you do look!”

Sir Richard Lawler replied loudly, but mechanically, for he banged the door of communication, and when alone he whispered an oath between his teeth to his shaving glass; while on her side, Lady Lawler nodded half a dozen times to herself, and muttered—

“I shall do just as I like.”

Soon after this they retired—Lady Lawler determined, on her part, to take her lessons; and Sir Richard with his mind made up that he would contrive to let Rivière know that his presence was not wanted, even intending to proceed to broad insult if hints would not suffice.

Possibly Sir Richard Lawler did not foresee the consequences that might follow a broad insult offered to a fiery little Frenchman.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN UNPLEASANT EVENING.

THE next day there was relief for Madame Rivière and for Sir Richard Lawler.

Dinner was about half over, when, in the course of conversation, Rivière, who had been particularly quiet during the repast, suddenly announced, in a calm, grave tone, that he had been making plans for the future; and that, eternally grateful as he was to his kind host and hostess, he could not think of imposing longer upon the generosity of such dear friends.

Madame Rivière's eyes flashed with pleasure, and, in spite of herself, she could not help glancing triumphantly at Lady Lawler, whose return glance, though, sent a chill through her breast. This announcement was news to Marie, for she had not seen her husband since his return, after being absent all day; and it seemed to her that her prayers to him had prevailed.

“She has been telling him what I said last night,” thought Sir Richard, glowering at his plate. Then he looked across the table at Lady Lawler, to meet an indifferent, scornful *aillade*, while she spoke to Rivière, saying how sorry she was—how sudden the announcement, et cetera. But the matter

soon dropped by common consent; for it had not escaped the notice of Lady Lawler that Mr. Sellars, the butler, and James, her ladyship's footman, had pricked up their ears, and were very busy round the table.

According to custom when they were alone with the Rivières, upon Lady Lawler leaving the dessert for the drawing-room Rivière and Sir Richard soon followed; for the refugee cared little for the wine, and found Sir Richard anything but a pleasant host; while, moved by a low feeling of doubt, the latter could not rest in peace away from the drawing-room, lest Madame Rivière should have retired, and his wife be engaged in a tête-à-tête.

But now that there were no servants present, Lady Lawler, who felt sure that Sir Richard had been insulting Rivière, whose words at dinner had sounded bitter and sarcastic, at once threw down the gauntlet to her husband, as she beckoned Rivière to her side with her fan.

“I am so grieved, Monsieur Rivière, that you should have come to this sudden determination,” she said, softly. “I fear that we have ill performed the part of hosts, and you have been very dull.”

“But it has been a Paradise,” said Rivière, with emprossement, his eyes sparkling with pleasure. “It is happiness to be anywhere in the presence of Lady Lawler.”

“You confounded little cad!” muttered Sir Richard to himself, as he stood by the drawing-room table, jerking the books about, too much occupied to hear a low sigh from the sofa close at hand, as Madame Rivière flushed deeply and then turned very pale.

“You will not forget my lessons, Monsieur Rivière,” said Lady Lawler. “Those must go on all the same.”

“Indeed, no. I could not forget the kindness that enables me to commence these duties. No, I shall not forget, but come and give you many long, long lessons, till you speak our dear language better than your teacher. I begin with you at once—is it not so?”

“Oh, yes—we commence to-morrow, I hope,” said Lady Lawler loudly, and glancing at her husband.

“To-morrow it shall be,” said Rivière; “and I hope to have many, many pupils—to make quite a fortune. Sir Richard will, I am sure, give us his good word!”

He looked at the baronet, who seemed to be deeply immersed in the book he had

taken up, and was now sitting on a lounge, with his back to them; but, oddly enough, opposite to the mirror over a console table.

"To be sure—oh, yes!" exclaimed Lady Lawler, answering for her lord. "Sir Richard shall do all he can for your advancement."

An observer might have seen Sir Richard Lawler's shoulders twitch at that word *shall*, but he did not turn his head.

"It will be such a relief," said Rivière, enthusiastically. "We shall be very happy in our work. Marie there and I shall be rich—eh, Marie? Say, child, we shall be quite rich, shall we not?"

Madame Rivière murmured assent, as her eyes wandered uneasily from her husband to Lady Lawler, and then to Sir Richard; who, she could see, was now gazing eagerly at her, as if trying to read in her countenance the same feelings as those which troubled him so sorely. But the moment she saw that she was observed, she, as it were, shrank into herself, cast down her eyes, and sipped her coffee without a word.

"We shall never be out of your debt, Sir Richard," said Rivière, in a calm, incisive fashion, after replacing Lady Lawler's cup upon the table; and to Sir Richard's eyes it seemed that, in the act, for a brief moment his fingers tightly pressed those of his lady. "But times may alter," he said, somewhat bitterly. "Who can say but that you may be arrested some day for supposed complicity in an attempt upon the life of your Queen, and then who knows what may happen?"

"Yes, who knows what may happen?" said Sir Richard, rising on being thus appealed to, and speaking in a rough, almost rude, fashion, as he turned his back offensively upon Rivière, and walked towards the window.

Rivière's sallow face flushed, as he turned to glance for a moment at Lady Lawler, hardly knowing whether to resent his host's behaviour or not.

"But these English nobles are pigs!" he muttered to himself; but his anger passed away, as he saw Lady Lawler smilingly inviting him to a seat at her side, where he went for a while, till at a hint he rose, offered his arm, and led her to the piano, where he stood leaning over her, and turning the leaves of the music, as she rattled through two or three brilliant arrangements of popular airs passably well.

Meanwhile, Sir Richard stood gazing

moodily from the window, and Madame Rivière—bent of head, and with eyes veiled with tears, tried hard to distinguish the stitches in the intricate piece of embroidery upon which she was at work. Now and again, she glanced almost shudderingly at the piano, where, with all the effusive gallantry of a French lover of music, Rivière was still bending over Lady Lawler, making from time to time complimentary speeches, to which the latter replied by turning her handsome bold eyes full upon his, and uttering some whispered words inaudible to the others, as roulade after roulade answered the rapid fingers upon the keys.

"How vain, how foolish!" thought Madame Rivière; "does he not see how it angers Sir Richard? Why does he not think?"

But Rivière seemed neither to think of nor see anything but the handsome woman by his side; and he redoubled his attentions, forgetful of the effect they might have on wife or husband. It appeared at last as if a scene were imminent, for Sir Richard crossed the room, threw himself into a chair, and took up a book as if about to read. The next moment he tossed it down, and crossed to Madame Rivière, plunging roughly and at once into a blundering speech about some current topic, but in so strange a manner that it was evident to his guest that his thoughts were elsewhere; and he soon returned to the window, where he stood half hidden by the curtain.

Another piece and another were played, and the positions did not change. The urn was brought in by the servants, but the tea remained unmade; and as if aware that she was watched, and to show her power, Lady Lawler continued to engross the whole of Rivière's thoughtless attention.

At last Sir Richard, who had been scowling at the musical couple till his patience seemed to be quite exhausted, suddenly exclaimed aloud—

"Hang it, Addy, I cannot stand this any longer!" and strode across the room to where Lady Lawler with affected, and Rivière with real, surprise, turned upon him astonished looks.

He had been as earnestly watched though himself by Madame Rivière, who for some minutes past had been sitting with her colour going and coming, her lips quivering, and fingers trembling, so that she could

hardly hold her work. Troubled as she was at heart respecting her own feelings, and sensitive too on behalf of Sir Richard Lawler, she was more filled with anxiety for him whose frivolous behaviour had so wrung her, with or without cause for uneasiness she could not say. She had, then, been judging Sir Richard's feelings by her own; and, as she read his anger in his looks, kept her eyes fixed upon him anxiously, ready, as it were, to give her husband warning of the impending storm. She told herself, as she sat there, that she was a woman—weak and confiding—stung by her jealous feelings, but striving hard to bear the slights, to crush down her agony. Sir Richard, she argued, on the contrary, was a strong, bold man, stung to anger by that which gave her pain. She had been dreading for long that a collision would ensue, and yet she had not dared to interfere—hoping, as she did, that each moment would see a peaceable ending to so unpleasant a scene; but when, at last, she saw Sir Richard start forward, and heard his exclamation, she, too, hurriedly left her seat, and feeling that the moment had come for her interference, she strove to be ready in the emergency.

But Marie Rivière had not reckoned upon her feebleness: the room seemed to swim before her eyes; she staggered, and would have fallen heavily, had not Sir Richard Lawler caught her in his arms.

ME AND MY DOGS.

GYPSEY GYP.

GYP always put me in mind of Toby, the learned pig, who was brought round the towns of Lincolnshire some thirty years back—a fine, fat, smooth, white pig, carefully washed and scraped, till he was as “clean as a Christian,” so his leader said; and, certainly, his personal appearance was most satisfactory. One day, Toby was led round the town by a bright chain, just by way of an advertisement of the evening's performance, while the big drum and Pan-pipes were behind, and a banner, emblazoned “The Learned Pig,” in front. Toby walked along, smooth, white, and decorous, merely giving an occasional grunt, or a snuff at some vegetable refuse left in the way, till the procession was passing a filthy, muddy pool by the roadside—for we were a dirty set of people at Swilford, and local boards were not then born. The pool was inches

deep in mud and water, and Toby, though learned, was still a pig. He must have felt like the old Irishwoman, “so horrid clean,” for, in spite of the checking of his bright chain, he gave a grunt of delight, rushed off, and the next moment was having a glorious wallow, first on one side, and then upon the other, snuffing, snorting, running his nose under, and blowing up a mud volcano, and at last completely smothering himself with the cool, wet, odorous slush, in whose midst he lay upon his side, half buried, winking one eye; and, in the midst of his thorough enjoyment, giving vent to little soft grunts of satisfaction, in spite of the cuts of a whip, the dumb astonishment of the big drum and pipes, the looks aghast of the banner-bearer, and the delighted roars of the crowd.

Doubtless Toby received merited punishment for his lapse from philosophy and learning; though, after all, he may not have been to blame, his philosophy taking perhaps a Diogenic turn, in the midst of which he looked with scorn upon the refinements of civilization.

Gyp always put me in mind of Toby, for in spite of polishing influences, the dog would assert itself upon every opportunity.

Gyp was the property of Miss Perronet, an elderly young lady, who possessed the paradoxical quality of growing younger as time passed on. I vow that the last time I saw her she was at least forty-five, when she apostrophised herself as “Naughty girl, to be so forgetful!” and in the most mincing of tones. She was a dreadful woman, who made you turn cold all down your back when you were left alone with her; for she would misinterpret your words, and faint away in your arms, and afterwards send you a letter from her solicitor. She was a woman that the wanton god must have taken delight in making a butt for his arrows, till she bristled all over with his darts like a moral hedgehog; and talked, looked, and dreamed of nothing but the tender passion. But somehow all Miss Perronet's love-dreams turned into dreary wakings; and she still lives in a state of single blessedness, pouring the teeming urns of her affection upon dogs.

Miss Perronet bought Gyp in Regent-street, of one of those amiable-looking peripatetic vendors who stand by the pavement edge, with two dogs nestled inside their waistcoat, one in each hand, and say half a dozen more attached by chain and string, which they spend their time in trying to draw

into a Gordian knot, that shall prove for each a hangdog noose.

Miss Perronet was shopping with a friend; and just at that time in mourning—inward, not outward—for a defunct pet, to wit, an Angora cat of a very large size, whose sudden death so affected her that she placed one room at the veterinary surgeon's disposal when that gentleman held a post mortem examination, which lasted four hours, and during which he emptied a decanter of sherry and smoked three cigars—the former as a necessary stimulant; the latter, as he explained to Miss Agatha Perronet, in case of infection.

One thing was certain: Mr. Glanders did make a long incision from end to end of the cat, and partly removed its skin; then he made a great deal of mess; and ended by washing his hands and smoking, with his heels upon the hobs, having previously locked the door to avoid interruption over so particular an investigation.

I never heard how much Miss P. paid Glanders; but she informed me that the poor cat died from "fatty degeneration of the heart." Glanders himself had the audacity to wink at me solemnly when I alluded to the matter, and asked whether the lady had secured another pet.

I did not tell him that she had brought down Gyp to Kensington, where I then resided; for the vendor of dogs had seen Miss Perronet's glances directed at his stock-in-trade, and taken advantage of her weakness to inveigle her into purchasing the carefully shorn, washed, and combed French poodle Gyp, with his black, beady eyes, woolly coat, naked hind quarters, frilled ankles, and tufted tail.

"What did I want for him, marm?" said the man. "Only five poun'; and he's a dawg as you'll allers be proud on. Too much, marm! A fi'-pun' note too much for a dawg like that, marm! Take him, marm; and if ever you're tired of him, bring him back to me, marm, and I'll allers take him back for the same money. Wouldn't part with him now, marm, for less than six—which would be a poun' for profit—only I'm juss now overstocked. Here's that 'ere ten, marm, and seven dozen and a harf at home; 'cos I've taken the stock of a mate o' mine, as has declined the business and gone inter rats."

"Into what?" said Miss Perronet, slightly startled.

"Rats, marm, for swells as keeps terriers. Don't want a nice rattin' terrier, do you, marm? or a spannel, or a—"

"No, my good man, no—not to-day, thank you," said Miss Perronet.

"Better take the dawg, marm," said the man, holding it right in at the fly window.

"Stand aside, my good man," said one of the draper's gentlemen, who had brought out the parcel for which the fly had been waiting.

The dog dealer stood back, and looked at the gentleman in black from top to toe, till his head disappeared in the fly, when, winking at Miss Perronet's Buttons, the canine vendor pointed slyly at the draper's legs, gave vent to a soft "ciss," and the next moment a tiny terrier had fastened viciously upon the glossy black trousers, to the terrible discomfiture of the polished assistant, and the ecstatic delight of Buttons; while the unfortunate dog was taken up and cuffed by his master.

"That's a dawg, marm, as I wouldn't offer to a lady on no account," said the man, taking his place again at the fly window, so that it could not be drawn up, and holding in the shining Gyp, who now began to whine unaccountably, and look imploringly in the ladies' faces. "Now, this here, marm, 's a regular parlour dawg, one as 'll never grow no bigger—while you may do anything with him; he's for all the world like a child, marm. Kiss me, Gyp."

"And then," said Miss Perronet, "the sweet thing turned up his head, and put his pretty little black nose to the man's horrid, rough mouth, and kissed him; and then turned to me, whimpering so prettily, that I could not help saying, 'Poor fellow, then,' when he leaped on to my lap, and, before I knew it, his dear little, cold nose was against my lips. And, really, it did seem so nice to have something to love and ki— There, dear me!—what am I saying?" she simpered, turning quite confused, and blushing; while the cold sensation I have before hinted at again attacked my spine.

But Miss Perronet soon recovered, and continued her history.

"Then the poor dear curled up on my lap, as if he was quite at home; and when the horrid man put his hand in to take him out, Gyp growled at him.

"There, marm," he said, in his horrible, coarse way, 'I never see such a thing in

my life. Just look at that, now. A dawg as I never before knowed to show a grain of ill-temper. I wouldn't take him back now, even if you didn't pay me for him. That dawg seems as if he belonged to you. That's instink—that's about what that is. You'll be obliged to have him now, marm, for just look when I try to take him back.'

"Then he put in his hand again, to take hold of Gyp, trying slowly to touch him near his dear little pet of a tail, but Gyp bit at him quite fiercely, and the man snatched his hand away, saying—

"There now, marm! aint it astonishing?"

"But,' I said, 'five pounds seems so much for such a little dog, my good man.'

"That's just it, marm,' he said; 'if he had been twice as little, he'd have been twice as much: the littler there is of them, the more they're worth. But then, marm, seeing as he's took to you, and you're likely to be a good missus to him, I won't say nothing about his collar and chain, which is as good as saying four pound ten for the dawg. I wouldn't sell him to anybody, marm, even you, at such a beggarly price; but when outer kindness one has taken a friend's stock-in-trade, and he wants the tin, and a poor man's got a sick wife at home, and nine kids down with the measles, as might carry any of 'em off and—don't be skeered, marm, that dawg aint never been in the same room with 'em, besides being rubbed with roll brimstone, as keeps off the infection.'

"And so I bought him," said Miss Perronet; but she did not give the whole of the particulars, omitting the following—for just as she was wavering in the balance, up came a policeman with—

"Now, then, you must move on with that fly—you're stopping the way for the carriages."

Then came the ominous thump of a barouche pole against the back of the fly.

"Please tell your driver to go on, ma'am," said the porter attached to the establishment.

"Now, then," shouted somebody's coachman."

"Drive on, my man," exclaimed a pert footman, bustling up to the flyman, who responded by giving a backward wag over his shoulder at his hirers.

"Now, John, mind them dawgs," said the dealer, "or they might interfere with them calves," and the footman backed a little.

"Now, come—this fly must move on," said the policeman.

"Don't be in such a 'nation hurry," said the dog man. "Don't yer see the lady's a-gettin' out her puss to pay me for the dawg?"

And then he gave a peculiar wink at the man in blue, which silenced him for a few minutes, during which Miss Perronet, flurried and anxious, drew a five-pound note from her purse, and handed it to the man, who passed in the end of the thin chain, said "Thanky, marm," and was about disappearing.

"But you'll take the dog back if I don't like to keep him?" said Miss Perronet.

"Sartinly, marm," said the man.

"And return the money?" said Miss Perronet.

She did not hear his reply, for the fly was moving off; but doubtless it was favourable.

"Now, John," said the dog dealer to the pert footman, whose ladies had just disappeared through Swan and Edgar's portals—"now, John, never mind the dawgs, they won't hurt, I'm going to stand a pot on the strength of that. Come along, Bobby."

The policeman looked down majestically, and beat together his white Berlin gloves, as if above anything of the kind; but five minutes after, the three men were discussing a pot of ale in Air-street, and listening to an account of the performances upon twenty rats by "that there little tarrier;" so that when the gentleman in plush found out that he must go, and disappeared round the corner, his people were waiting for him.

It was strange; but, though the very next week Miss Perronet found out many little failings in Gyp, she never sought out the vendor to ask him to take back the dog. Possibly the attempt at such a transaction would have been unavailing; but it was never tried.

So Gyp used to spend his time between sleeping in a little basket-work pagoda by the fireside, and standing on a chair looking out of window, and saying "Wuff, wuff," at everybody that went by; for he could not bark. He fared sumptuously, on mutton chops, minced meat, and chicken legs; grew tremendously, in spite of the prophecy of his vendor; and regularly once a week went upstairs and hid himself beneath his mistress's bed, from which stronghold he had to be hauled and dragged out by Mary, with the long broom, until she could reach his

ears or his woolly coat; for Gyp knew well enough that it was washing morning, when he would be plunged into a bath of hot soda water, whose ebullition he used to supply by bubbling, when Mary, who disliked the job, held his head under water, and rammed the soap in his eyes. No wonder that Gyp was like the celebrated Dirty Jem, whose history used to be related to us in metrical language in infancy. Gyp howled dolefully to be washed; he loved not to be clean; and, like pig Toby, he very soon sullied the purity of his outer dog, for, as soon as he could release himself from the hands of maid Mary, Gyp would indulge in the well-known canine shake, making his ears rattle, and then get out in the scrap of garden to rub himself dry, placing his nose against the ground, and forcing himself along in a peculiar way of his own, which brought the whole of one side into contact with the dry earth or grass; afterwards repeating the process on the other side.

Yes, Gyp might have been carefully educated to be a drawing-room dog; but he was a dog still, and loved the worst of company. He would steal out, and then associate and make friends with every dirty, low-lived blackguard dog in Kensington. He would shrink from the ribbon-led and collared pets of the neighbouring good society, and seek, instead, dirty street dogs from the alleys out of High-street—roving vagabond mongrels—and get into every possible mischief. The result was, as might be supposed, that Gyp was always lost, and the Kensington printer receiving orders for another fifty handbills, offering ten shillings reward for the missing dog.

It must have been expensive work, keeping a dog like Gyp, irrespective of food, tax, and chains and collars; for there was the printing and advertising, and paying the crier; while, in almost every case, after dark, a gentleman with a hoarse voice—singular thing, but doggy gentlemen from the neighbourhood of the Dials and Whitechapel always do have hoarse voices, and carry their hands down very low in their pockets—a gentleman with a hoarse voice, a straw in his mouth, and hands very low in his pockets, would remove one of the said hands, ring softly at the area bell, and then wait to see “the missus.”

“Have you come about the dog?” Mary would say, if she opened the door and stood out in the area.

“Yes,” the man would answer, “’bout the dawg.”

When Mary would disappear, and Buttons would admit the stranger into the front hall, and tell him to sit down; to which he would reply, “Thanky, mate;” and then shuffle about on the mat, and pick the cap he had removed from his croppy head, at the same time carefully taking stock of the portable objects around.

Then down would come Miss Perronet, to inquire if the “good man” had found “poor Gyp.”

Well, maybe he had, and maybe he hadn’t.

He warn’t sure about that; but he *had* seen the bills up, and if the lady liked he would try and find him for her.

But hadn’t he seen the dog, then?

Well, not as he knowed on; but he thought as he knowed a chap as had seen a dog as might be him.

And could he get it back?

Well, maybe he could; only it was a long ways off, and he should have to ride in a bust. And if were the same dawg, it was a gentleman as had found him, and his little boy had tuck a fancy to it, and he didn’t suppose he’d like to part with it agin. Leastwise if that was the dawg, and not the one as Joe Bulk skinned, and as had been runned over by a Pickford’s wan in Oxford-street. This wasn’t a littlish white dawg, as had had his hair half clipped off, was it?

Yes—yes, it was.

And got little tuffles o’ hair about his legs, and on the end of his tail?

Oh! yes, that was dear Gyp (tears ad. lib.).

Good deal o’ curly hair about the head and neck, and long ears?

Oh! yes—yes—yes. That was poor Gyp, no doubt; at least it was almost word for word the description in the handbill.

Ah, then he thought that ere was the dawg as Joe Bulk skinned; and the lady wouldn’t like to have him back without his skin, would she?

Miss Perronet saw in her mind’s eye a horrible, raw body; but thought she would like to have the dog to bury.

But the visitor wasn’t sure, you see, that he was right. P’raps arter all—he wasn’t sure, mind—but arter all, it might have been a black dawg as was runned over and killed, and the white was the one as the

gentleman had found and his little boy was so fond on.

Ah! yes, that must be Gyp; for he was so fond of children.

Well p'raps he'd best see, and come back nex night, only it warn't no business of hisn, and he'd come a long way: p'raps the lady wouldn't mind givin' on him something to drink.

Ah, no, Miss Perronet would not mind opening her purse-strings in favour of Gyp; and soon after the stranger melted into the outer darkness, while the lady dissolved, in tears.

Twenty-four hours of anguish—such as no one but a lady who loves a dog can comprehend—and then the squeaking of the wire, and the slinking ring once more at the area bell; when to the visitor Mary:

Had he brought the dog?

No, he hadn't, but he thought as he knowed something about him.

Then up once more would go Buttons to admit the stranger, and stare at him somewhat admiringly, especially at the tight cord trousers, heavy boots, and large cord and fustian-sleeved vest, with bronze sporting buttons—a get-up that the page, who possessed a wholesome contempt for his claret-coloured livery, would consider sublime.

But this time Miss Perronet would be down upon the stairs to encounter the bearer of tidings.

No, the dawg warn't dead; it were the black dawg as Joe Bulk skinned, and the lady's were a white dawg warn't it? Cos if him were a black dawg, it were dead; but Joe Bulk would take five bob for the skin, and she might have the dog's body for another five if she wanted to bury it.

But it was not the black dog, but the white one.

Ah, then he knowed a man as told him as a gentleman he knew had got the dawg; and as his little boy was so fond on it, he wouldn't part with it again.

But there was the reward. Ten shillings.

Oh, yes!—he knew of that, and it would have been all right for a pore chap; but he were a gentleman, he were, and didn't care for money, and wouldn't take nothing under two pun'.

But he must be made—he would have to be prosecuted, and compelled to give it up. What was his name?

Didn't know his name. He was a gent

a man he knew knowed on. But he believed he'd give up the dawg for two pun', and he were a-waitin' outside at a public, to see whether the lady wanted the dawg or no.

Miss Perronet would give a sovereign, but she could not think of giving any more. So the ambassador rose to leave.

P'raps, as he had took a deal o' trouble about it, the lady wouldn't mind givin' on him something to drink again, as she didn't want the dawg.

But Miss Perronet did want the dog—very, very much, indeed; and she was sure he would come back half-starved.

Ambassador was werry sorry; but the gent wouldn't, he said, give up the dawg for less than two pun'. His mate said so.

But would not thirty shillings do?

Ambassador, who had got the door half open, and was squeezing his body through very slowly, was quite sure it wouldn't; and then, having about safely passed the crack, he was very gradually closing the door, when Miss Perronet shrieked out in anguish, "Two pounds!" and would have given them there and then, but for the warning voice of Mary, who suggested that the dog should first be brought.

Fortunately for Miss Perronet, "the gent" was not above taking two pounds; for the aforesaid ambassador very soon returned with Gyp, the money was paid, and there was repose in Gordon-square.

It would be hard to discover how often money was made out of Gyp; but he was always disappearing, and some one turning up who had heard some one say as they'd seen such a dawg somewhere. But Miss Perronet's faith in her idol continued the same; and it really must have been by a happy dispensation that the dog was often either lost, stolen, or absent on a vagabond foray: for without these interregnums of spare living, or semi-starvation, Gyp must have perished of plethora.

Fancy being fed upon lamb, chicken, and veal; pampered with luxuries; overcrowded with carbon and meat-supplying matter, by being taught to crunch lumps of sugar; being almost stuffed when appetite seemed to fail from repletion; and all this with no more exercise than jumping up to the dining-room window, and jumping down again! It would have been serious for any animal, and must have undermined the constitution of a French poodle.

The latter part of the time I knew him, he put me in mind of the fat boy in "Pickwick;" for he was nearly always asleep, and when partly aroused by some extra vicious flea, he would only make a dab at it with his paw, instead of giving a vigorous scratch, like any other dog.

No doubt Miss Perronet thought this extremely genteel; though she privately told Mary to put in a little extra soda in Gyp's bath, and purchased one or two of those tablets advertised by means of the hideous scratching dog as much as by the quaint name of the maker.

But the day came at last when, like the old lady's son Jerry, Gyp was lost and never was found. A mystery hung over his disappearance; and, mind, I don't think that Mary or the baker had anything whatever to do with it. All I know is that the woolly-looking bagpipes floating in the Serpentine near Kensington Bridge bore some slight resemblance to the inflated carcase of Gyp; but not feeling sure, I will be silent. Horrible dreads flashed through the mind of his bereaved mistress. She abjured pork pies, and shuddered when sausages were named; while she almost fainted when I told her that I always wore dogskin gloves. Handbills, crying, advertising in *Times* and *Morning Post*, were of no avail. Interviews with hoarse-voiced men, and the production of dogs innumerable, had no effect; for Gyp was unmistakably lost upon this occasion.

Miss Perronet always bewailed his ingratitude; for she would not believe him dead, but attributed his disappearance to his beauty of person, his well-known gallantry, and the impressionableness of the softer dog sex. She fully believed that there was a lady (dog) in the case; and many, many months elapsed before she would be consoled—of course by another dog. But removal to another part of the country prevented me from enjoying the pleasure of its acquaintance.

SIL DONNAGHAN THE PIPER.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER EVENING AT SHAUBHAILE.

SOME weeks had passed by; the excitement about Colonel Bennett had died away. He had now almost recovered, and was walking about with his arm in a sling.

"I'll be a match for these confounded

blackguards, if they venture to attack me again," he would say. "I'll show them that they haven't taught me what fear is."

So he was always to be seen about his place, in and out of the shrubberies, up and down the plantations. He took care to be well armed, and always had a brown curly retriever with him. This dog—Vixen by name—was as well known as her master.

One evening, as Sil was sitting alone in the kitchen at the Windy Gap, drowsy and almost asleep, a figure glided by the window, and Mick Flaherty stole noiselessly in.

"Father Sil," he whispered, "you're a raal good one—ye're afther savin' me life, and I'll niver forgit it to yer."

"Mick, Mick, kape quiet, lad—kape quiet, or they'll be afther yez. Don't mind Dinny Dregan; and for the love ov God, lave the colonel alone!"

Mick nodded.

"All right," he whispered, as he slipped out.

But, somehow, the vision of those intense black eyes, and the fierce, desperate eagerness of that dark, determined face, lingered about the piper's memory, so that it was impossible to banish them. He took a dislike to coming home by the Shaubhaile cross-roads. There was a short cut from the mountain by the fields; but as it was now almost winter, the marshy ground was flooded, so Sil often took a path that led through a meadow of Colonel Bennett's, and as it came out much higher up than at the cross-roads, by this means the unpleasant spot was avoided.

One evening, Sil was just skirting the clump of poplars from the field side, when he heard something like the rustling of leaves. He stopped to listen, and looked about him. It was a dark night, far darker than that memorable one some months before; no stars were out; not even a fragment of a moon now gleamed in the sable sky. Suddenly Sil felt something warm and frisky dash past him: it was Vixen, Colonel Bennett's dog. Somewhat reassured, he was going on his way, when whiz came a well-remembered sound close to his ear.

"He's at it agin," said he. "Marcy on us, he's at it agin!"

The words had hardly passed his lips, when another startling whiz flew by, and a sharp bullet struck him on the breast. Down he sank on the swampy grass, his eye—his one misty eye—closed; and his bagpipes gave a faint, spectral screech as

they fell to the ground. At the sound of those bagpipes, Mick Flaherty, who had been hidden in the clump of poplars, rushed out, and running to the prostrate figure, lifted the face up to the scanty light.

"It's Sil, it's Sil!" he cried, starting back in horror. "Holy Mother! it's Sil I'm afther killin'! Wake up, Father Sil; wake up, gov'nor; it's only lettin' on, yez are—wake up, and spake to poor Mick Flaherty, that's heart-scalded because yez won't look at him."

"I'll—niver wake up—agin—Mick, me boy," faintly whispered the piper. "I've played me last tchune. Ye've done for me—this time—out and—out."

"Och, Sil; och, gov'nor! I haven't—don't tell me so. Powers above, look on us this night! Sure, I'd rather it was meself than you. I was waitin' for the colonel; and when I saw Vixen, the baste, and hard the step, I thought it was him, for he do be walkin' here sometimes. But Vixen must have been only afther a rabbit. She wouldn't let a bark at me, for I knew her whin she was a dawshy pup, and I nursed her whin she broke her leg, and I thought it was all right; but sure, she's destroyed us. Oh, Sil, Sil, what brought yez here to-night; what brought yez here at all, at all? But I'll run and git yez a dochter or a bone-setter, and they'll make yez all right agin."

"No—bone-setter 'll—iver set my bones, Mick—I feel the life in—me runnin'—out—like the wather in a leakin' can."

"Oh, God ov Heaven! och, Holy Vargin and all the saints look down upon us. Oh, marcy, what's this I'm afther doin'? Killing the best and kindest frind that iver man had, that saved me life, and wouldn't be-thray me for all their money or their gowld. And och! my grief to think that poor Sil, the quate creature we all loved, should die, and that bloody hound of a Binnett should live. Oh, Sil, Sil, is there a God above at all?"

"There is, alanna. I tould a big lie, and somehow it laid heavy on me sowl; but I couldn't tell agin yez, Mick; and now it's better for me to die, for it's an ould man I am, and I haven't long to live, any way. It's more fittin' that I should die than e'er a one. Tell Gretta—but no—maybe not; jist say wan word, Mick, honey—and that is that ye'll give over this shootin' at wance and for iver. It 'ull do good to ne'er a one."

"Why did I want to kill that Binnett?"

said Mick, starting to his feet. "Why did I thirst to have his wicked blood? Because he had no heart for the poor—because he turned them out ov house and home; and while he was in warmth and plinty, he wanted them to be hungry and naked. Whin I see these proud rich men drive past in their carriages, or standin' at the dure ov their grand clubs, twisting their fine cigars in their hands, and laughin' about their dogs and their horses, I hate them. I know that jist by are some poor craturs hardly able to keep body and sowl together, prayin' for marcy to keep the life in thim. Sil, if there is a God, he's a God for the rich and not for the poor."

"No, no—agra, he cares for the weeny stars and the dawshy little blue flowers in the hidge; and he cares for us, though may be we don't know it. Lave iverything to him, alanna—lave vingeance to him; he'll bring it right. But fly, Mick, fly, or they'll be afther yez. Binnett and his men have, maybe, heard the shot; and if they find yez they'll take yer life. Run across the glin, and over the mountain, and down by the say, and thry and catch one of thim weeny fishing boats and save yerself."

"And lave yez here alone?" said Mick. "Divil a bit ov me. I've kilt yez, and I'll stay wid yez till the last."

"Then I can't die aisy. How can I, and you wantin' me to live? I'll tell yer what, Mick—just kneel down and say over the 'Our Father' and the 'Glory' wanst, and thin run over to the glin; ye'll maybe see somebody that 'll send a praste to me—Father Murphy I'd like best. Sure, you'll not say no to the last thing poor ould Sil 'll ever ask ov yez?"

Mick obeyed.

"Yez forgive me, Father Sil?" said he, as he stooped down and kissed the old man's face again and again, while the hot tears streamed from his fierce, dark eyes.

"I do—I do, Mick, acushla—I do, as I hope to be forgiven. Run off now, and don't come back, for your life. Put the pipes near me, that I may catch a houl't ov them. I know the smooth feel of the wood well. I niver seem lonesome while I have them by me. Off wid yez now, Mick, as if fire was afther yez."

Over hedge and over ditch, over wall, and bog, and field, Mick now scrambled and ran, first to Father Murphy's to say that Sil Donnaghan the piper had met with an accident,

and was lying near the cross-roads of Shaubhaile; then to the doctor's with a similar message; and then up the mountain, and across to the sea. Hailing a little fishing boat, he was soon tossing in deep waters. Never again did he see the little shop at the Windy Gap; never again did he look up at the dark peak of Knockcrea. Sometimes on land and sometimes on sea, he wandered about, a moody, dejected man.

As the evening wore on, Sil's life ebbed slowly away. He thought how Gretta would be waiting for him, and how she would go to the door, and stand looking down the road, with her hand shading her eyes; then how she would go in and try to keep the griddle cakes hot, and wonder still more what could be making him so late.

"She sets great store by me intirely, the cratur," said he to himself; "but the will ov God be done!"

And now the darkness grew deeper; the poplars shivered as the night breeze swept by; the lights in the great house began to be put out one by one. Then the door opened, and there came a cry of—

"Vixen, Vixen, Vixen!" followed by two or three sharp whistles.

The dog came bounding by, and as she passed the piper, she stopped, sniffed about, and licked his face, and some of the blood that had flowed from his wound. Then, as she heard her name called again, away she dashed; and now all was darkness indeed.

Sil put out his trembling hand to grasp the pipes that had been a kind of gospel to him, and that had trickled streams of peace and rest into his spirit many a time.

"There'll be pipes up above, I'm thinkin'," said he, smiling feebly to himself. "And listen to the weeny larks. I heard thim beginnin' to sing—they do be thinkin' it's mornin', the craturs!"

His head fell back, the one misty eye closed for ever: his spirit had flown even higher than the larks—flown, we know not where.

When he was found an hour or so later, he was lying with his own placid, serene smile on his face. One hand still continued to grasp the beloved pipes—grasped them so tightly that it seemed almost sacrilege to undo the hold.

All that night, and all the next day, and all the following night, bitter cries might have been heard coming from the Windy

Gap. It was Gretta Donnaghan, bewailing her late-found husband.

"Och! Sil, Sil, pulse ov me heart!" she cried, "why did yez die? Why did they take yez from me, whin the hearth was warm, and the spring 'ud be comin' round agin, and the sky 'ud be blue, and the flowers 'ud be looking up for yez? Arrah! why did yez lave yer poor Gretta, and she all alone widout yez? Och! Sil, Sil, why, why did yez die?"

But there was no answer. The poplars rustled by the lonely cross-roads of Shaubhaile, and the silvery sea plashed on.

THE END.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

A DWELLER IN TENTS.

MY experience of tents has heretofore been of an unpleasant character. Only lately was I not present on that unlucky Sunday at Wimbledon when Nature, in a rage, shut up our big umbrella, and me in it—administering a heavy blow to our proceedings? Was I not out in camp with our autumn manœuvrers, and did I not sleep night after night under canvas, and did not like it? For sleeping in your clothes is not pleasant: turn which way you will, you find that the tailor has placed buttons on the waistband of your trousers, which buttons unceasingly seek to, and do, make button-holes in your flesh. Did I not determine at last to have one good night's rest, and prepare my bed of sweet-scented thyme and heath, and cover it with blankets; and did I not, as I prepared myself selon règle for my couch, revel in the idea of how sweet and soft my bed would be? Which it was not! Did it not seem as if the blooming heather was all stalk, and set on end; or was seeking to strike root in my unoffending person, which is by nature plump? And when at last I was dozing off, did I not find myself tickled to death by investigating ants, till the storm came, which made me rise in dismay to run out and hold on by the lines, drive in pegs more tightly, and suffer all the agonies of a shower bath whose drops fell, not eight feet, but half a mile? Was not that the occasion upon which I called myself a name strongly associated with folly, and determined to go home? Truly, my associations with canvas were not pleasant; and I felt no envy then for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,

or any of the old dwellers in tents, for I decidedly gave the preference to bricks.

But then I had not been out for a holiday; I had not been fêted, and seen how matters run when Nature is propitious, and smiles for a whole week upon the coming of age of a young patrician. In short, I had not been for my trip to Duncombe Park.

You, sir, in your editorial capacity, say unto me, "Go! Observe casually and report frequently; but let the observed be of an interesting nature." Exactly, of an interesting nature. This will bear more than one interpretation. Consequently, at this season of out-of-towning and holiday keeping, I have sought to interest myself.

You do not blame me? Of course not. Here, then, I give account of myself. I have been casually present at Helmsley, where the coming of age of the viscount of that name has been celebrated. I have been out in camp. I have dwelt in tents, and I like it "muchly." Our control department has not been hampered with red tape, but made pleasant with hundreds of yards of royal scarlet cloth for decorations. It has had no dealings with Aldershot or the War Office, but has been under the management of a happy coalition—one that could only beget pleasure for those who were there; for did not Gunters, of Berkeley-square, find each dish, and John Edgington and his company, of Long-lane, West Smithfield, the coverings?

The recollection of the pleasant scene, and its liquid and solid accompaniments; the sound of the viol and the tabor, and all sweet minstrelsy, makes me metaphorical, when it is necessary that I should deal with solid facts, which I will strive to do.

Let it be known, then, that the coming of age of Lord Feversham's son has been celebrated at Duncombe Park—a pleasant demesne by Helmsley Castle; that fine old, double-moated relic of the good old times, when fighting was in fashion. "Buckingham's Boast," it was called, from its impregnable character. Close by, too—at least, what the country people here call close by, though the walker finds he has a couple of miles or so to travel—is Rievaulx Abbey, a splendid old ruin. Here, as seen from the terrace kept up by the Feversham family, there is a fine view of the noble old pile, and fancy soon peoples it with portly monks and religious processions, till Hatton's song

suggests how they had "peach and pine, and gargled their throats with the right good wine, till the abbot his nose grew red;" and which, by the way, is part of a very good ditty, but doubtless very calumnious. Our terrace is about half a mile long, all pleasant turf, with a temple at one end and a pavilion at the other, whose ceiling took Brucini, the painter, seven years to decorate with its classical dames and gentry; for Aurora seems to hold court with Apollo and the Muses, while near at hand are Vulcan and Venus, Ariadne and Theseus, Hero and Leander, and last, but not least, Jupiter and Europa. It is almost needless to say that this is not the first time these classical ladies and gentlemen have sat for their portraits.

I mentioned that the country people said the abbey was a short distance off, when it was long miles; but the statement was excusable in people who had been seeing a triumphal arch erected by their station, who had quite a fair in their streets, and upon one of their inns the legend, "Long life to Viscount Helmsley," which did not quite conceal the board above the door, unfortunately leaving exposed to view, just beneath the motto, the words, "To be consumed on the premises."

My task is not to tell of the athletic sports, the races, the company who came to do honour to the fête, or the speeches made; for my text is tents, and my duty to describe the camp of pleasure prepared by John Edgington and Company for our resort.

It was as if Lord Feversham had been gifted with Aladdin's lamp, and had said to John Edgington, the slave of that lamp—

"I would have many guests, and my house does not suffice. Build me palaces!"

And there they were.

It was nothing to us that they were not solid, so long as they were beautiful. What cared we that they would not stand a hundred years, when we wanted them but for a week? No architects were needed; no excavations made; roads were not cut up with heavy wains of materials; but as if by magic, on lawn and in garden, up sprang dining-room and ball-room, coffee tent, drawing-room and retiring-rooms, athletic sports tent, and around them a regular following of smaller tents, to make kitchen, pantry, store-room, servants' hall, larder,

and wine cellar, dug out and laid on the lawn: a regular canvas village—bright, pleasing, and recreative; and all joined, tent to tent, by corridors of canvas, festooned with fringe of scarlet and yellow, while the walls—canvas walls, of course—were striped with red and white.

But I have said nothing of the little kiosques for those who would sit, smoke, flirt, or converse *au sérieux*—pleasant little umbrella affairs these, that open and shut like the hard-to-keep protector which gives their name. Nor have I quoted the smaller garden party tents. In fact, their number was bewildering; and one had no sooner wandered from one, than it was to find oneself in another.

Which shall I describe? Shall it be the ball-room, where your Observer whirled in the mazes?—enough of that. The ball tent: how shall it be described as seen by night, with its striped canvas, scarlet and white sides? One long boarded and canvas-covered tent—no, room; no poles visible for dancers to avoid at each turn, as well as to spoil the coup d'œil; walls festooned with fringe of scarlet and blue—the colours of the 2nd Life Guards, in which regiment Viscount Helmsley holds a commission; shrubs ranged round in pots; girandoles, with bell-glass protected candles; mirrors here and mirrors there, to reflect the light and multiply the gay scene; shields and trophies at intervals; and, above all, chandeliers to shed soft light and give brilliancy to the whole. The genii of the lamp had been busy here, and seemed to have transported a piece of Almack's ready for the occasion.

We next pass down a scarlet-carpeted canvas corridor, and we enter another tent for refreshments. We are hot with dancing, and would have an ice. "How fairy-like!" exclaims our partner, and well she may; though one never heard anything more of the fairies' doings in the tent way than that they sometimes got under a good spreading mushroom. But here we have Art calling in Nature to help our slave of the lamp. I beg Mr. John Edgington and his company's pardon for calling him or them slave, and do not wish that abolition may abolish his slavery. Our slave of the lamp has, in addition to his striped walls and festooned ceiling, laid down boards for floor, covered them with cocoa matting, and the cocoa matting with scarlet cloth, which contrasts most strangely with the soft, tender grass, and looks as if we

were walking upon a smoothed-out bed of scarlet geranium leaf and blossom broadly separated.

It was worth while to get stared at, and even jostled, to take a peep here and there—at the little tents here, where the pastry-cooks were dishing up; or in another, superintending some peculiar metal mortars, buried in crystal lumps and salt, which open to give out discharges of Vanilla, strawberry, and pine ices; there, where the glass and china were piled; or in another, where the dingy, long-necked bottles waited to pour forth the liquid lustre of many gems, and, still or bubbling, whisper frequently of the vintage of many lands. Here, beneath the slaves' canvas walls, were the creamy Champagnes or Moselles, the pleasant German Hocks, and the deep red clarets of France; and a few steps more, and we were where—No! let them wash up in peace—we will not intrude. So the servants washed, and we went. Still, that tent was wanted.

The band tent next, where Mr. Thrush—well named—bottled his music for the dancers of the eve. A pleasant vintage, too, was his—too good, in fact; for his hearers were insatiable, never tiring in cotillion or valse.

Can I say more about them than that all were pretty, bright, and light, well-arranged, and gay with flag and burnished spear? To see them, imagination said that they had come down whole—complete.

It was not until one was admitted to the mysteries of tent-making that one saw how that it was managed. John Edgington and Company's tents are contrived something after the fashion of the hats of Houdin, the conjuror: they are inexhaustible, and contain the most extraordinary arrangements for packing up and conveyance. You see a dining-tent, large, roomy, and ornamental; it is full of seats and tables, and hundreds may dine and admire the decorations; but the dinner done, the guests fled, and the confectioners have swept away the débris, with the brilliant flowers and epergnes, and presto! the thing all packs up small, and the slave of the lamp puts it in his pocket; the gardener sweeps the lawn, waters it, and runs over it with the roller; and no one knows where the palace stood.

But stay, it is as well to be exact in these matters: it would be fairer to say that the whole goes into a portmanteau—at least, not

quite. The packing arrangements, though, are most ingenious, and the giver of a fête would be astonished at the small space occupied by a canvas palace or two. It is easy to see that the tents will fold up neatly; that the walls will roll up into neat balls; and that the silken flags, the red striped fringe, and festoon work, will go in a small compass, like the scarlet cloth in rolls. But about the flooring, and the seats and tables—what about them? They are so contrived that they fit together and form boxes and lids in which are packed the looser impedimenta—the pegs and ropes which the minor slaves are drilled to manage, even as sailors would the rigging of a ship. So quick, in fact, are the men, that to completely raise and fit a tent of a hundred feet long or so has been reduced to a task of about two hours' duration.

But to my fête once more. I pity you who, bound to the wheel, saw not with me the illumination prepared by our slave of the lamp for our delectation. Leaving tents glistening and transparent with lights, with music playing and floating upon the soft breeze of the summer night, he had prepared for us while we feasted a pleasant surprise, one well according with his title—a feast of lamps, an illumination; spreading for us, like many-coloured glowworms, three miles of little lights along the sides of the paths, round the beds in lines and curves, and pleasant perspective parallels, till the grounds were throbbing, as it were, in soft pulsations of light; and again the scene was compared to fairyland.

Music, dancing, feasting, fireworks, tents, a gay company. The scene was one to be remembered, and compares pleasantly with other dwellings in tents. The great drawback to the affair was that the time should come when all the brightness should be stripped from the canvas, the walls should be loosened and begin to flap, the tent pegs be drawn and the poles laid prone, with their unreefed folds upon the grass. But so it is—all that's bright must fade. The order is given by a sub of the lamp, and this Arabian Nights' scene must pass away—the palace of Aladdin be borne to another site; and so it was here. It was like havoc, to see the ruthless spoiling of the glories; but the tents fell one by one beneath the busy hands, and were borne away to the stores in Long-lane, West Smithfield. What a change! But it is a long lane that has no turning,

and perhaps ere now our slave of the lamp is running up a palace upon some other pleasant lawn, for other eyes to see, for others to enjoy; for your Casual Observer observes with regret that his holiday is at an end.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XXVII.

"HE is married to an old woman, I hear," Miss Middleton continued, "and they have lost their child."

I bowed.

"I am sorry for that," pursued the lady, with a slight, a very slight tremor in her voice; "but it almost serves him right, for marrying his grandmother."

"Mrs. Woodward is not quite as old as all that, Miss Middleton."

"Is she not? But really it is no concern of mine. Does he preach well?"

"He does," I replied. "Well, that is, for those who like his ornate style, and the subjects he generally selects."

"You are flattering to your friend," said Miss Middleton.

"I must speak of people and things as I find them."

"Dear me! I must be careful, or I shall have you showing me up as flippant or sarcastic."

"Really, Miss Middleton—"

"There, I have no mind to crush you. Live, poor mortal! But seriously speaking, I am sorry to find your friend has run away from us—or perhaps I ought to say I am glad he has sufficient sense of shame left in him to avoid us."

"I don't know about running away; business, probably—"

"No; he was ashamed to meet us, I know," affirmed Miss Middleton, "after the shabby manner he treated us—papa, I mean."

"You surprise me. I thought—"

"Never mind what you thought, Mr. Cochrane, you hear what I say; and perhaps I shall have an opportunity of telling him so yet. I intend to go and pay his wife a visit by and by."

"I do not think she will receive you, Miss Middleton. Remember, it is but a few weeks since she lost her only child."

"Poor old thing!"

Again the slight, the very slight tremor of the voice. It gave me hope, however. The flippancy of her manner and conversation was probably only assumed, after all, to hide her real and deeper feelings: she had undoubtedly loved him, and probably loved him still.

There was a pause of a few seconds, and I was upon the point of rising to take my leave, when she looked up, and asked—

"Is he fond of her?"

I had been thinking of something else—the long round of visits I had to pay—and for the moment was at a loss to know what she meant.

"Who?" I said, looking helplessly into the lady's face.

"He—your friend," she explained, stamping her foot impatiently on the floor, "is he very fond of his wife?"

It was impossible for me to answer her question in the affirmative, and I did not choose to give her my own impressions on the subject, so I fenced.

"Charles is not at all demonstrative before witnesses," I said; "I cannot answer for his conduct and bearing in private."

"You are like all the rest of your profession," sneered the lady; "I do not believe one of you could give a straightforward answer to a plain question if it were to save your life."

"You are hard upon us, Miss Middleton."

"Am I? Do you dare to say it is not true? But I will spare you, seeing that you have told me what I wanted to know. I suppose, indeed, I ought to apologize—pray accept the intention for the act."

I bowed. I did not relish being laughed at, but was at a loss for a retort.

"I presume there are some human beings to be found about here?"

"Certainly, Miss Middleton."

"Come, you know what I mean—people one can visit?"

"Yes, there are several very agreeable families in the neighbourhood; and you need be under no apprehension of being overlooked by them."

"Ah! that is a consolation certainly; but I shall take care I am not buried down here for any length of time. You have been at our house, I suppose?"

Doubtless I was dull that morning.

"Your house?"

"Yes, our house," contracting her brow, and stamping impatiently.

"Ardmore House, you mean?"

"Of course; what other did you think?"

"I have been through Ardmore."

"Is it endurable?"

"It is a beautiful spot; the house, indeed, is old-fashioned, but the situation is delightful."

"Tell me all about it. I am going over there this afternoon with papa; but I want to hear what you have to say about it first. Is it a large place?"

"I think I have heard the housekeeper say there were thirty principal rooms."

"Is there a ball-room?"

"Yes, I think she mentioned a ball-room."

"Conservatories, and all that sort of thing?"

"Yes, and all that sort of thing," I replied, unconsciously repeating her words; for I was very anxious to get away.

"There is no echo, I hope."

"No what, Miss Middleton?" for I had not quite caught the meaning of her question, and the reproof it conveyed did not occur to me for some time afterwards.

"Nothing. Will you proceed?"

"The house stands on a slight eminence, surrounded by gardens and lawns."

"How far is it from here?"

"About a mile and a half," I replied—"midway between this and Moighrath."

"Are there any trees?"

"Fir trees; but no large timber, which does not seem to grow anywhere about the neighbourhood."

"Any game?"

"Of what description?"

"Birds, beasts, and fishes."

"Yes; there are snipe and woodcock, pheasants and wild duck, rabbits and hares, and trout and salmon in the rivers."

"Any good post-and-rail fences to jump over?"

"No; but there are stone walls, as you might have seen when driving along, which do just as well. Are you fond of riding?"

The lady stamped her foot, but disdained any answer to so palpably absurd a question.

"Does anybody live at Moy—what do you call it?"

"Moighrath."

"Yes. What hateful names the places have about here."

"If you mean gentlefolk, there are none but the vicar and his family."

"Are they rational beings?"

"I think so."

"That is some comfort. She is a Lady something, is she not?"

"Lady Georgina."

"Is the vicar a lord, or a baronet?"

"Neither, Miss Middleton."

"How is she a Lady?"

"In her own right: her father was an earl."

"Indeed! Papa has amused me very much by studying a stupid book he calls a 'Peerage,' full of all sorts of funny little annals, and wanted me to read it, too! But I had not the patience to wade through the first chapter. Are the gardens pretty?"

"They could be made so; but it will take time, for they have been utterly neglected for years."

"I shall see to that. Do you know, almost the first person we met upon landing in Dublin was an old gardener of ours, and papa has engaged him again, as he was in want of a situation."

"Indeed."

"You knew him?"

"I fancy not, Miss Middleton. What is the man's name?"

"Martin Mackey."

"Dear me! Why that must be the man that worked for Mr. M'Lachlan! Has he a very disagreeable wife?"

"Who? Mr. M'—what's-his-name, or Martin?"

"The gardener."

"And who is Mr. M'—?"

"My father-in-law."

"I beg your pardon. No; Mrs. Martin is a very nice, chatty little woman—at least, she used to be, but she is sadly altered for the worse. We went to see her, in a dreadful house in a horrible street, and she was very pleased to see me."

"Indeed."

"I hope you are a better hand at curing your patients than you are at carrying on a conversation, for you have let me do all the talking this morning. Mrs. Dobbie will wonder what I have had to say to you all this time."

At this very palpable hint, I rose and bowed.

"Good morning, Miss Middleton. I shall be able to report favourably as to your health to Sir John."

"Good morning, Mr. Cochrane."

She did not stand up, or offer me her

hand; so I bowed again, and left the room, very considerably disenchanted.

As I drew near to my house, I perceived the rector's car in the distance, with two people upon it, and waiting for its approach, discovered to my surprise that he himself was one of them.

"Why, Charley!" I exclaimed, as he pulled up before my door, "I heard you had gone to Dublin."

"I! by no means." Then tossing the reins to his man, he said—"Let me come in, old fellow, I want a word or two with you in private."

When I had taken him into my study, he sat down, looking very pale, and drawing a long breath, gasped rather than spoke—

"Have you seen her?"

"Miss Middleton, yes."

"Well?"

"She is a peacock."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"WHAT do you mean?" was the rector's impatient exclamation, upon hearing the comparison I had instituted between the most brilliant of birds and his former acquaintance.

"I mean just what I say, Charley. She is perfect as long as she remains silent; but when she speaks the charm is dissolved directly. She is more like the fowl I have compared her to than any person I have ever seen."

"Hum! She must be greatly altered. Did she say anything about, about—"

"You," I said, helping him, in pity to his confusion.

"Well, yes—anything about me?"

"She did—a great deal."

"What?"

"Nothing very complimentary, I can assure you; so you had better not ask me any more."

"But I shall. Tell me every word she said."

"She called you a fool—a downright idiot."

Charles coloured with vexation, but tried to laugh it off.

"Why?" he asked.

"For several reasons," I replied, not caring to enter into particulars.

"What reasons?"

"My dear fellow, had you not best ask the lady herself? It is not pleasant for me to have to report uncomplimentary remarks."

"You consider it a compliment, I suppose, to be called a fool and an idiot?"

"No; quite the contrary."

"In that case, what objection can you have to tell me the rest?"

"Spare my feelings, if you have no pity for your own, and ask the lady herself. She told me she intended paying you a visit this afternoon."

The rector's face became a spectacle.

"I had quite made up my mind to avoid her," he said, "but changed it before I got as far as Pennyletter; and now I am sorry I did not go on."

I felt rather sorry, too; but, after all, the meeting must take place some time or another; and perhaps the sooner the better."

"Come with me, and I will pay a visit to Sir John at once."

"I have a number of calls to make; but never mind, I'll go."

"Thanks, old fellow; jump up on the car, and let us get it over."

Nothing was said during the short transit between my house and Mr. Dobbie's, where we found the whole party at lunch; and the interview was far less embarrassing to my friend than either he or I had anticipated.

Sir John was very friendly, and Miss Middleton quite self-possessed and affable. She inquired with much appearance of interest for Mrs. Woodward; but did not allude to the recent loss they had sustained, nor did the baronet.

"You must come and see us at Ardmore, Woodward, as soon as we are settled," said Sir John, as we were about taking our departure.

Charles was beginning to frame an excuse, when the baronet interrupted him.

"No, no, my friend—I insist; and Mary shall call upon Mrs. Woodward presently, to give her a personal invitation."

"Perhaps you are not aware, Sir John, of our recent bereavement?"

"Yes, yes, my poor fellow," exclaimed the old gentleman, in a feeling tone of voice and manner—"I know all about it from our friend, Mr. Dobbie, and need not tell you how truly sorry it made me; but you and I must not grieve after the fashion of those who have no hope—for I, too, have had a heavy loss, as you are doubtless aware."

Charles was aware.

"Well, well," continued Sir John; and quoted the well-known passage from the

Book of Job, where the Patriarch expresses his submission to the will of Providence.

I think Charles listened impatiently; at least, he turned round on his heel, as on a pivot, twisting up the carpet into a small vortex, much to Mrs. Dobbie's disgust; but he recovered himself in a moment, and made a suitable reply.

"Come home with me," he asked, when we were outside the house—"I dare not go in by myself."

"Dare not?"

"No! the contrast would drive me to do something, or say something, I might be sorry for; of that I feel certain. And therefore, for all our sakes, I ask you to come with me."

"Very well," I assented.

"A peacock!" I heard him mutter to himself more than once during our short drive, "an angel the fellow meant—yes, an angel!"

I said nothing, thinking it best to let him alone, and allow his own reflections to master themselves, and allay the tumult they had provoked.

On reaching the rectory, he jumped off the car.

"Come in," he said to me, "or, that is to say, you need not, if you don't like. I feel better now. I know I was fated to mar my own fortunes myself; and so, as I can't help doing it, it is not my fault, eh? Don't come in if you don't like."

I noticed a wildness about his eyes that did not reassure me, and thought it would perhaps be better if I did go in with him.

"It will be no hindrance, Charley," I said. "I'll go in with you for a few minutes, at all events."

"Very well."

And we entered the house together.

Mrs. Woodward was in the parlour, superintending the laying of the table by Margery M'Anvil for lunch. Truly, the contrast was a pitiable one; but who was to blame?

Nevertheless, it was sad to think of what was and what might have been. But the deed was done, and past recall: repining and retrospection but made matters worse.

Still, as I have said, it was a pitiful contrast between Miss Middleton, in her wonderful beauty and marvellous grace, and poor Mrs. Woodward, in her neglected age and decrepitude; for the poor thing had really grown decrepit—she was so lonely and heartbroken then.

"To think that I am tied to such a creature!" cried the rector, in a bitter undertone, as he caught sight of his wife in her déshabille.

I pressed his arm, and whispered—

"Ask either of them to lay down her life for you, and see which of them would consent."

"I wish to Heaven she would!" was the rector's reply.

"Dear me," exclaimed Mrs. Woodward, with a start, "is that you, Charles? I did not expect you before evening."

"You were mistaken," was her husband's ungracious reply.

"How do you do, doctor?" said the poor lady, holding out her hand to me.

"Quite well, thank you, Mrs. Woodward. I hope you are better."

"I am quite well—as well, at least, as I shall ever be."

Charles stamped impatiently with his foot on the floor.

"That will do, Margery," he exclaimed, snappishly, addressing the servant; "you can go."

"Finish laying the cloth, Margery," commanded her mistress.

The woman hesitated, uncertain which order to obey.

"Leave the room!" thundered the rector. "Did you not hear me speak?"

"I hard you plain enough, and I hard the mistress, too. Sure, there's *raison* in what she says; and it's me work I'll finish before I go, your reverence."

"Go on, then, and make haste about it," exclaimed the master.

But Margery, far from hurrying herself, finished what she had to do with extreme deliberation; and when she had concluded, said, addressing her mistress—

"Is there anything more I can do for ye, ma'am?"

"Bring in lunch," said Mrs. Woodward.

"Not for me," interrupted the rector—"I have had mine at Dobbie's."

"You will take some, doctor?"

"No, thank you, Mrs. Woodward—I, too, have lunched at the agent's."

"Never mind, Margery, bring it in all the same. Do you know, Charles," continued the poor lady, turning to her husband, "Betty Ellicot has sent her niece to say she wished to see you very particularly as soon as you came home."

"Confound her! an old hag!" was the rector's extremely unclerical remark.

"I said you would go to her the moment you came in."

"Did you? Just like you, too!" muttered her husband, taking up his hat and slamming the door behind him.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Woodward," I said, preparing to follow the rector.

"Stop a moment, doctor, I want to speak to you," exclaimed the lady; and I stayed.

"Have you seen her?"

"Miss Middleton, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"I have seen her."

"Is she so very beautiful?"

"She is not a very attractive woman."

"Do you think it is true she loves him, and would marry him, if he were free?"

"Marry whom?" I asked, although I knew perfectly well what she meant; but I wanted to gain time—"Marry whom, Mrs. Woodward?"

"My husband."

"What can have put such a notion into your head?"

"He did: he said this morning, before he went away, that if it was not for me he would marry her directly; and that he was going to Dublin because he could not bear to meet her. So I thought to myself that if he was really in love with her, he would come back; and you see he has. Oh, I'm a miserable creature! If my poor child had only lived!"

I tried to console her, but with indifferent success. At length she grew calmer, and repeated the embarrassing question—

"Do you think she loves him?"

In the meantime I had been revolving the matter over in my mind, and had arrived at the conclusion, which I then expressed—

"She may have done so, Mrs. Woodward; but now I do not think she does."

"If she ever did, she does so still."

"Pardon me, I cannot see it in that light: I think it is possible to outgrow the sentiment."

"Never! And he loves her, for he told me so this morning, and said I was all that stood between them and happiness."

"It was very wicked of him to say such a thing."

"Not wicked," she interrupted, hastily. "he is too good to be anything wicked; but he cannot help his feelings, poor fellow, nor hers either. I would gladly die and get

out of his way; only I am such a coward, I dare not."

"And very happily so, too," I replied.

"I don't know," she said, bitterly. "What good am I to any one, and what have I to live for?"

"Your own soul."

She buried her face in her hands.

"That is what Margery says."

"You have not surely spoken to that woman on such a subject, Mrs. Woodward?" I exclaimed with alarm; for I distrusted her sadly.

"I must unburden myself to some one, or I shall go mad; and she is the only one I have to speak to."

"Emma," I began, "would only be too happy—"

"No, no, doctor; it would be a sin to worry that happy, bright young creature with the sorrows and repinings of a wretched old woman like me. Oh! what a fool I was ever to marry, or to think that he could care for such a one as I am!"

"I feel sure he cares for you as much now as ever he did, Mrs. Woodward."

And I spoke truly, for I felt convinced he never had loved her; but she, poor soul, I knew, would attach another meaning to my words, and so she did.

"Do you think so? I believe he did at first; but then why should he say this morning that he wished I was dead, as I was all that stood between him and wealth and happiness?"

"He was in a bad humour, Mrs. Woodward; you must not mind all Charley says. I know him better than you do, although you have known him longer; and I never take any notice of the queer things he often says to me when he's out of sorts, for I know he does not really mean them."

"I suppose I must try and bear it; but it is very, very hard."

"Hope and pray."

"It is easy enough to say so, doctor; but when a person has nothing to hope for, what then? If I was a Catholic even, it would be different: I could go into a convent."

"No, pardon me, you could not, Mrs. Woodward; no married woman could be taken into one of those institutions—at least while her husband was alive."

"Excuse me—I was brought up in one, in France, and I know more about them than you do: under certain circumstances

I could obtain admission, at least as a lay sister; and so Margery says too."

"Pray, beware of that woman, Mrs. Woodward."

"Why do you say so, doctor?"

"Because she is in league with those who wish no good to either you or yours."

"You are prejudiced against the poor thing."

"No, quite the contrary; but I have noticed signs and indications, insignificant in themselves may be, but important as indicating in what direction the current of Catholic opinion flows. Take care how you involve your husband still further with those who neither forget nor forgive."

"You cannot mean that any danger is threatening my husband?"

"Not danger—at least as far as I know at present; but there has been an unfriendly feeling against him ever since he preached that sermon last July."

"I wish we had never come here: we were so happy at Tobercully. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I feel certain I shall go out of my mind, doctor—if I am not mad already."

"You should not give way to such feelings, Mrs. Woodward. Think of the example you owe to the people about you."

"Yes—example—I dare say! What example would you show them in my place, doctor?"

"I cannot tell; but I believe there is no burden heavier than can be borne."

"It is very easy for you to speak, who have never known what trouble is all your life."

"You cannot say that, Mrs. Woodward; for you do not know."

"You have not lost your child."

I was silenced.

"Will these people expect me to call on them, doctor?"

"Sir John, you mean?—no. I heard Miss Middleton say she intended calling upon you."

"I shall not receive her."

"So I told her. And I would not, if I were you, Mrs. Woodward. The interview would agitate you too much, and make you ill."

"Do you think so?"

"I do."

"Very well. I will see her if she calls."

"But, Mrs. Woodward—"

"My mind is quite made up. I want to be ill. I wish with all my heart I was ill."

"Don't, Mrs. Woodward—pray, don't speak in that manner, or you might be taken at your word; and perhaps you would not find the illness so easy to be borne as you imagine."

"That does not concern any one but myself, doctor. It is indifferent to me what, or how much, I have to bear, if I can but come to the end."

"It is wicked to talk like this."

"Is it? So much the worse. I don't want to live. There are plenty of happy people who do, and cannot; and plenty of miserable who want to die, and cannot."

Seeing that my presence only served to irritate her, I withdrew, with a heavy heart, and found Margery M'Anvil in the hall, waiting, as she said, to let me out.

Undoubtedly the woman had been listening.

As she opened the door, I was suddenly confronted by Miss Middleton and Mrs. Dobbie, who were on the point of ringing.

"Turn back and introduce me, doctor," exclaimed the former, as, raising my hat, I was about to pass them by.

"Mrs. Dobbie will perform that ceremony much better than I could, Miss Middleton," I said, trying to escape.

"Mrs. Dobbie is not going any farther," said the lady, taking my arm—"come."

Resistance was impossible, and I returned into the house; but Mrs. Woodward refused, absolutely, to see her visitor.

TABLE TALK.

TOLERATION seems, like polish, to have made rapid strides during the last hundred years or so. *Notes and Queries* gives the following from John Wesley's journal, respecting an adventure during his visit to Sheffield, in April, 1743:—"While I was speaking a gentleman rode up, very drunk, and, after many unseemly and other words, laboured much to ride over some of the people. I was surprised to hear he was a neighbouring clergyman."

MOST PEOPLE have heard of the intellectual game of Fly Loo, as played by Indian officers—that is to say, English officers in India. Mark Twain's jumping frog, too, that swallowed teaspoonfuls of shot, and became too heavy to leap and win his master's race, has become pretty popular. There is possibly truth, as well, in the bets on

drops of rain running down the window panes. Flies, frogs, drops of rain, all enlisted to do a little bit of gambling; and here is something fresh, invented by some ingenious being—crab races on the shore. It is said to be very enlivening to the jaded intellect; but when three or four small shore crabs are ranged for the start, how about those which prefer to shuffle down into the sand?

WE NEED CHANGE. The busy bee and the ordinary ant of natural history have been flung in our faces for centuries as specimens of industry—in fact, ad nauseam; so, in future, it is proposed, for the benefit of the rising generation, that when we wish to inculcate perseverance, and give, too, an example, we should say—"Go to the Claim—ant, thou sluggard!"

WE READ that on "Tuesday evening the dealings in home mining shares were again very limited, and the market was dull. Devon Great Consols declined to $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ prem.; Cooks' Kitchen to $16\frac{1}{2}$ to 17. The uninitiated might ask what is the produce of Devon Great Consols? This is doubtful: probably copper or tin; but there is no doubt about the latter—Cooks' Kitchen evidently supplies food for speculation.

THE AMERICANS are, like their Old Country brethren, fond of trade organs, which, as every one knows, are newspapers devoted to the interests of one particular trade: in other words, organs which only play one tune. Our cousins, it seems, are now going to start a journal to represent the leather trade, and it is to be called by the euphonious title "The New Shoe and Leather Journal." A friend suggests that it ought to go like old boots.

THE AMERICAN publishers, Osgood and Co., of Boston, announce among their new books as ready, "My Little Girl," the last serial story in **ONCE A WEEK**.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

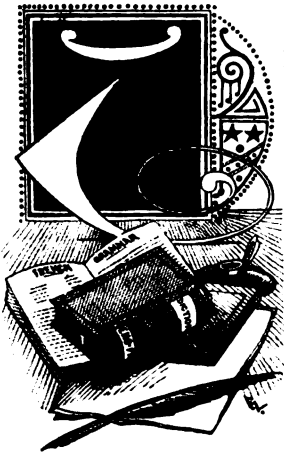
No. 297.

September 6, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XXII.
MADAME IS BETTER.



HE Frenchman uttered a cry like that of a woman as he caught sight of his falling wife. In an instant he was by her side, forgetful of everything but her condition, and striving hard to bring her back to consciousness. He did not see the

look of rage in Sir Richard Lawler's face, nor the half-angry, half-contemptuous glance darted at him by his lady.

"Here—quick, pray—water—wine! Will miladi ring? The poor child has fainted. The room was too hot. She must have looked to me for help, and I was so occupied with the music that I saw it not. Why was I not at her side!"

Lady Lawler directed a look at Rivière that might have been interpreted as reproachful; but it did not reach its mark, being intercepted half-way by Sir Richard, who was furious.

Still Rivière saw nothing, but continued:

"Yes, yes, poor child, it was the heat, and she is still weak with our many troubles. Thanks, Sir Richard, I am ever in your debt. I will lay her here upon this couch for a few minutes, and then take her to our room. Poor child, how white she is!"

"Take Monsieur Rivière down to your

study for awhile, Richard," said Lady Lawler, firmly, as her maid, who had been summoned, now entered with water and Eau de Cologne. "There, Monsieur Rivière, leave her to me. I will send for you both soon. We will bring her to."

Sir Richard set his teeth, and seemed disposed to resist; but Lady Lawler never removed her eyes from his for a moment, and, seeming to control him, drove him slowly to the door, where he grew more wrathful than ever.

"I obey at your word, miladi," said Rivière, stooping first to kiss the pale forehead of his wife, and then bending low over Lady Lawler's hand, to press his lips lightly upon her heavily jewelled fingers.

For a moment Lady Lawler swept to the door, leaned upon her husband's arm, and whispered a few words; after which she passed Rivière with a smile, and he followed Sir Richard from the room without a word to the study, where the baronet sat down silently, and gazed at him in an uneasy fashion; while he took a tiny book from his pocket, detached from it a leaf, and proceeded to make himself a cigarette from some very common tobacco, lighted it, and lay back in his chair, furtively watched by Sir Richard while he sent little puffs of smoke towards the ceiling.

It was with something like a feeling of shame that Sir Richard, with his anger now somewhat abated, proceeded to help himself to a costly Hudson from out of a cedar cabinet upon the table, and lit the fragrant roll, to puff at it heavily. Something like a feeling of compunction came over him in spite of his anger—which seemed, after all, to be more directed at his wife than at his guest.

"Poor little beggar!" he thought. "He is, after all, not worth being savage about."

Perhaps it was the parting address of Lady Lawler, perhaps the mollifying influence of the cigar, that produced this change.

At all events, there was no disposition evinced, on the one part, to come to words; while, on the other, Rivière sat calm and thoughtful—till a summons was brought by the messenger James, and the gentlemen ascended once more to the drawing-room, where they found Lady Lawler presiding over the tea table, Madame Rivière being much better, she said, and having retired for the evening.

The poor little woman was too much troubled at heart, though, to stay away; and before long she descended to the drawing-room, to sit, pale and wan, watching every look, listening eagerly to every word, and magnifying nearly everything; for her senses were distempered, and she read disloyalty to herself in every act.

As for Sir Richard, his resentment seemed to have passed; but any attempt at conversation proved a failure, and on all sides the hour for retiring was gladly welcomed, to put an end to what had been a dreary evening—the last that the Rivières were to spend beneath Sir Richard Lawler's roof.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN ALARM.

BREAKFAST the next morning was a sociable meal. Even the servants looked cheerful at the prospect of losing their guests—Mr. Sellars smiling blandly, while James indulged himself in a sniggering grin.

"He thinks," he said to the under-butler, apropos of Mr. Sellars' smile—"he thinks they'll make him a present; but, if they do, they'll have to borrow it."

But James was wrong; for he, in company with the butler and the rest of the servants, received each a gratuity wrapped up neatly in paper, and accompanied by a few words of thanks, written in not the best of English.

How the money was raised was a mystery, but it was not thrown away, the impression made afterwards proving of value to Rivière in the troublous times to come.

As before said, the breakfast proved to be a sociable meal, Lady Lawler seizing every opportunity to pay some attention to the nervous little woman at her left. Sir Richard, feeling relieved, in anticipation, of a great burden, softened down into quite a spirit of cordiality, chatting familiarly with Rivière, and talking about his future prospects.

"I'm really sorry you're going, you know,"

he said once; and then, catching his wife's eye, he reddened like a schoolboy as he saw her amused smile.

"I am very, very grateful, Sir Richard," said Rivière, gravely; "and I shall not forget."

The breakfast finished, the party adjourned to the study, from whence the ladies went to the drawing-room, perfectly ignorant of a dispute going on upon the back stairs about the departing visitors' luggage.

Mr. Sellars had instructed James to fetch the light boxes down; and James, in duddgeon, had anathematized Mr. Sellars, *sotto voce*, as a fat beast, and gone off grumbling to transmit the order to the page, who complained in a shrill voice that it was not his place; and the probabilities are that Rivière would have had to carry his boxes himself had not the distribution of gratuities commenced. Hearing of this, at one and the same time James and the page rushed off together, cannoned, and Buttons was floored, rolling over upon the carpet, where he began to whimper, and felt that the game was gone, when the ringing of the study bell drew off his enemy, and Buttons brought the boxes down in triumph, and also fetched the cab.

The time for departure at last. Madame Rivière made an effort over self, and, responding to Lady Lawler's warm farewell, kissed her on both cheeks.

"It is not that I like her, though," she muttered to herself.

The farewell seemed as cordial, too, on Sir Richard's side; for he felt some little liking for the suffering little woman who had been his guest.

"You must come and see us, Madame Rivière," he said; and then, catching his wife's eye, he added, "often."

Madame Rivière bowed, but made no reply. She took it as a simple meaningless compliment.

"Only wait a bit till they're gone," muttered Sir Richard, "and we'll come to an understanding who's to be master, my Lady Lawler."

He was all smiles the next moment, though; and, as he frankly shook hands with Rivière, he pressed four bank notes into his palm.

He felt the next moment more warmly towards his departing guest than had ever before been the case, for the notes were quietly refused.

"I thank you, Sir Richard—no!" was the reply accompanying them. "I am already too much in your debt. I cannot take them."

"Oh, nonsense," said Sir Richard, bluntly. "Don't let the servants see. There, take them, old fellow—you'll find them useful."

"I thank you, my friend. I am as grateful as if I had taken many times as much; but I cannot let you give me money. Give me your sympathy in my troubles."

"Oh, yes, of course—of course," put in Sir Richard.

"And if," continued Rivière, not heeding the last remark—"if at any time I am sorely pressed, I will come to you for advice—for help, and you will not refuse?"

"But why not take it now?" said Sir Richard, who did not seem to approve of this prospective arrangement.

"Enough," said Rivière, firmly. "I cannot take it. Give me all your good wishes for my future success. Besides, I am not poor—I commence to-morrow to give lessons to miladi."

Those last words spoiled all. It was as if a black cloud had come over a sunny scene. A cold chill seemed to run through Madame Rivière, and an angry feeling of doubt and suspicion to attack Sir Richard. They were standing in the study, and Madame Rivière shrank from Lady Lawler's side. The latter, however, either did not or would not see the action; while Sir Richard became on the instant grim and distant.

"Ah, my friend," exclaimed Rivière, quick to perceive the change, "I have offended you in not taking that money. Forgive me, but I cannot. I have feelings. I am poor, but I cannot forget that I am still a gentleman. Marie," he continued, turning to madame, "the cab is waiting, we must depart. Once more, Sir Richard, good-bye. Lady Lawler, you have been a good angel to me and mine: au revoir!"

As he spoke, he extended his hands to Sir Richard, and warmly pressed those of the baronet, but without receiving any response.

"Still in offence," he said. "Yet I cannot take it."

Then he turned to Lady Lawler, bent over her hands, and kissed them again and again; she starting slightly, as she felt that there was a tear left glistening beside one of her rings.

The next minute the exiles were outside

the door, Rivière leading his wife swiftly away. Lady Lawler made as if to follow them into the hall, but Sir Richard caught her angrily by the wrist, drew her back, and closed the door.

"No!" he exclaimed—"no more of it. We have done enough for them. The servants are there. Stay where you are. I'll have no more of it."

"For shame, Dick!" she exclaimed, hotly. "How dare you stop me? Come out at once to the cab. Servants, indeed! Let them chatter. Why, they will talk ten times worse if we do not go. And, besides, I know what they are: they will slight them, as they would have often done before, if I had not insisted upon the strictest attention. Come out at once. I will not have our visitors insulted by neglect now that they are leaving."

"This shall be the last time I give way," thought Sir Richard, as he opened the door and followed Lady Lawler to the hall, where they stayed until Rivière had handed madame into the cab; but just as he was about to follow, he started to see the wild, strange gaze his wife was directing at some one in advance.

Rivière turned on the instant, but was only in time to see the back of a figure hurrying away. It was sufficient, though, for him. He leaped into the cab, the door was closed, and he hastily waved his hand to those in the entrance; then, with brow contracted and pallid face, he whispered to the footman the address.

"Tell him to drive fast," he said, hoarsely, as the footman closed the door; and then he pulled up the window and shrank back into a corner of the vehicle, as it began to rattle and jangle over the newly macadamized road.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRACKED.

"DID you see him, then?" whispered Rivière, after a few moments.

"Yes," was the shuddering reply; "quite plainly."

"Perhaps it was fancy?" he whispered, hoarsely, trembling like a leaf the while, as he leant forward to peer cautiously from the little window in the back of the cab.

"Can you see him?" whispered Marie.

There was no answer.

"Louis, Louis!" she exclaimed again, "is there danger? Let us go back to Gros-

venor-square; they are rich and powerful there, and will protect us from him."

"I should have crushed out his life when I had him down there at my mercy," said Louis, hoarsely. "He is a reptile, a venomous snake, who should not be allowed to live—to track us here for our ruin."

"But, tell me," Marie whispered, in agitated tones, as he turned from the window, "could you see him?"

"No," was the response. "But it is evident that he has tracked us. He knew we were there, and bribed the servants to tell of our actions. Mon Dieu! he is not following us, because he will go back and learn of the footman where we are to go."

Madame Rivière sat, with hands clasped, pale, anxious, and trembling; while Rivière rose again to kneel upon the seat, and once more carefully look through the little window.

He could see nothing, though, to excite his apprehension. As far as he could make out, they were not watched. No one was following the cab; and he sat down at length, gazing from side to side at the busy thoroughfares through which they were passing.

"It was but fancy, my child," he said, quietly. "We shall be thinking next that we see the gendarmes after us. Pooh! it was nothing."

He started, for just then Madame Rivière uttered a low cry, covered her face with her hands, and shrunk into the corner of the cab.

"What is it? Good heavens, child, are you ill?"

"No, no! The window—the window!" she cried, hysterically—"looking in!"

Rivière glanced up at the little window, then thrust his hand out at the side, and called to the man to stop.

This took half a minute to effect, and then Rivière jumped out, and looked behind the cab.

Nothing there.

"What's the good o' stopping one for that?" growled the driver. "Just you call out, 'Whip behind!' if any boys get up, and I'll warm 'em."

Rivière glanced round, and then hastily re-entered the cab, which continued its journey.

"It was fancy, my child," he said, soothingly. "You are upset with our leaving. Never mind, we will soon be in peace."

"Some one—he—looked in," whispered Marie, glancing nervously at the back of the cab, in spite of her husband's incredulous smiles.

"We shall soon be there," he whispered, passing a protecting arm round her.

"But look—look out once more," she said, nervously; and, yielding to her importunity, he once more peered from the little window.

"There is nothing, my child," he said, laughing. "What folly! Why should any one want to gaze in at us from the back? No one is even following us. It was all a mistake."

He looked long and carefully round once more; but his position was too circumscribed in its view for him to see that there was a keen-looking, ragged boy clinging behind, his legs thrust over the axletree of the hind wheels, which afforded him the seat to which he clung by the help of some villainous-looking spikes.

Rivière took his place once more by his wife's side, and the boy clung to the cab till it reached a shabby street—that is to say, a Soho street.

Here the boy descended actively, drew a couple of buttons and a leaden disc from his pocket, and, creeping up close to the doorway of the house where the cab drew up, he began to play some mysterious game all by himself, said game consisting in throwing the buttons down upon the pavement, and then sending after them the leaden disc.

Hastily paying the cabman, Louis Rivière glanced up the street, and straight down, over the boy's head. Then, opening the door, he hurried his wife out, and into the passage of the dingy house; panted to and fro with his scanty luggage; and then, closing the door, he stood in a state of nervous trepidation almost equal to that of his wife, until he somewhat recovered his breath, and helped her to carry up their few worldly goods to the bare, shabbily furnished rooms upon the second floor, which he had secured at a rent which, to their slender funds, seemed frightful.

"Safe, at last, my cherished one!" he said, as he closed the door, and led her to a rickety rush chair, gazing round all the while at the contrast to the place they had so lately left. "Safe at last, Marie!" he repeated.

"Would I could think so," she whispered, glancing at the door. "You do not believe that I saw him?"

"Well, no," he said, smiling; "though I half fancied it myself at first."

"I am sure," she said, shivering.

"Well, if you are," he said, cheerily, "what then? He may not have seen us—he may not be able to trace us out if he has seen us; and even if he did find us, what then? I could call in the police, and have him dragged away. But there, bah! let us not frighten ourselves with shadows: he is not here. He dare not show himself again. He is a coward—a worm who would shrink from me now that he has not the officers to back him up."

He took her in his arms, kissed her fondly, and she smiled in return. She was more cheerful than she had been for days.

"Yes," he said, banteringly, "I see. Madame has her own way; she comes at her wish to her own house; and, look, bare as it is, she is in smiles."

"Yes, we can be happy here," she exclaimed, clinging to him. "Shall we not be independent and free?"

"But, still, it is a poor place to bring you to, my child!" he said, pitifully, as he glanced round at the shabby furniture and ragged carpet. "And what a prospect!" he said, leading her to a chair by the open window; "a sad change from Grosvenor-square."

"Ah! Louis," she exclaimed, passionately, "it is a palace, so long as we are together, and nothing to keep you from me. What is that grand house to me, so long as it is full of misery and discontent for your poor wife? But, Louis, promise me you will not go near that place again."

"To what place?" he said, dreamily; for his thoughts were far away.

"To that house—to Grosvenor-square."

"Not go again! What, after their kindness?"

"Oh, Louis," she whispered, hoarsely, "say you will not go. I cannot bear it. Some evil will come of it to both, I am sure. Think of me, and the anguish I suffer when you leave me."

"To go there!" he said, bitterly.

"There—anywhere!" she cried.

"There, there, I am not angry," he said, softening. "But still that silly jealous feeling comes back, I see. As if I could love any one but my little one here!"

Marie nestled more closely in her husband's arms, sobbing for a while, but becoming calm as he told her of his plans—of how he would work, and save and raise money to

buy them comforts; of how a régime must some day arise to flood France with sunshine for them both, when they would return and dwell there in peace.

He talked and talked on; but in spite of all his pictures drawn with sunshine in the midst, there was to him ever a dark cloud threatening to overshadow the fair scene, and that cloud took the form of Lemaire. He told his wife that it was mere fancy, but he was sure that his enemy was upon his track; and in his ignorance of English law, he determined that one of his first movements should be to ascertain what power Lemaire would have, and whether he could put the English officers of justice upon his track.

"No," he thought, directly after; "the refugee who places foot upon British soil is safe."

As they sat there in the dingy room, they could look over the houses and catch gleams of the ruddy, sun-tinged skies, flecked, too, with soft fleecy clouds; and, dimmed as they were by the foul veil of London smoke, they still brought joy and gladness into their hearts. They wanted to feel, in their easily affected spirits, that they were free and happy, and that poverty was their only foe—one of whom they had no great dread, for in spite of past sufferings and anxiety, they had not felt its full power, and knew not how many were slain by its fell arrows year by year.

It was enough for Marie now that she had partly forgotten her fright, that she had her husband away from the influence of Lady Lawler; but back came the old feeling of misery, as for a moment she thought of Lemaire, and the face she had seen or fancied she had seen at the back of the cab.

Is there, or is there not, any occult influence of mind upon mind, wherein, by invisible, intangible wires, a magnetic message of warning or advice speeds from one human being to the other? Marie might have thought so, could she have known that about the time when those shuddering thoughts of her enemy came upon her, his were busy about her husband and herself. He was no mere street boy who had clung to the back of the cab, and it was not done for the sake of a ride. In fact, the lad had gone straight back to one of the courts leading from Oxford-street, and received sixpence for the information he had taken back in such haste that he was breathless.

But Marie Rivière did not know this. She only felt at times a dull, dead sense of

impending danger, which Louis laughingly told her was due to excitement; and, lightly talking and caressing her, had brought a smile to her lip and a faint colour to her cheek.

They depended for their dinner upon their landlady—a thin, angular woman, who seemed as if hard contact with the world had rubbed all the flesh from her bones and dried all sweetness from her nature. She was jerky, too, in her ways, and looked suspicious and inimical at her lodgers. Her eyes were not strong, nor yet improved by the absence of lashes; but she worked very hard with them, and bored—if the expression may be used—bored her lodgers as if she was trying to reach below the surface, and find out how far they were prepared to pay their rent.

This amiable being also brought them tea—a very weak infusion of leaves, and a few unpleasant-looking slices of bread, scraped with buff-coloured grease. The meal raised symptoms of disgust in Rivière's breast; but Marie sat down smiling and happy. So he forbore comment: he only made resolutions for the future.

At last the evening, with the lamps starting into life here and there. They were alone and thoughtful. The morrow's duties had been discussed; their little, very little store of money counted; and chairs were drawn up to the open window, where Rivière was about to treat himself to his sole luxury, a cigarette.

He had rolled it up, moistened the paper, and secured it; and now lit a match and applied it to the end, drawing the fragrant fumes till the little roll was incandescent, when a faint cry from Marie arrested him—the cigarette dropped from his fingers, and he remained as if petrified, glancing down at an upturned face, plainly seen for a moment beneath the street lamp, curiously watching the window where he sat.

A cold dew of perspiration broke out upon his forehead, and his fingers clenched. Then action came back, and he drew softly from the window, and glided on tiptoe towards the door.

IN FANTI LAND.—II.

BILLIARDS, like all other amusements, pall on one's mind in Africa; so after two or three hours' play, the party broke up, when we adjourned to our rooms and fell

asleep, being assiduously fanned by some very pretty brown girls, who were perhaps from ten to twelve years of age, exquisitely formed, with small hands and feet. The only thing they had in common with the negroes of our imagination was their hair, which was rather too woolly for beauty; otherwise, their delicately cut features, fine noses and small mouths, classical foreheads, and almond-shaped, lustrous eyes, with dazzling rows of teeth, would, despite their brown skins, which were velvety enough too, have gained for them the palm of beauty. Timid and modest, too, these young creatures seemed. The huge fans with which they lulled us to sleep were made from the leaves and branches of the palm, the shape of whose leaf gains it the name of "Fan Palm."

Two hours' sleep refreshed us, and then we prepared for the governor's dinner. A marble bath full of cooled water freshened us up, and a small glass of a native bitter proved an agreeable tonic and appetizer. Donning our scarlet and gold, we got into an American waggon, which our host had had lately from New York, built to his own ideas, and, with a team of four natives in front and two pushing in rear, we dashed through the long, wide street that led from his house up to the Castle of St. George del Mina. Here we were received with all honours and courtesy, and passing through long corridors, mounting many flights of steps, we at length attained the ante-room of the banquetting hall, where we found the kind and hospitable colonel, with some officers of his staff, waiting to receive us.

Their bonhomie at once put us at our ease, and glasses of schnapps and guld wasser von Dantzig of the rarest kind and quality being handed round, we entered the hall itself—a noble apartment of some forty to fifty feet in length, by twenty-five broad, and quite twenty high, paneled round half-way up with a dark wood, called odoom, which effectually resists the attacks of the white ant, or the bug-a-bug, as it is called in Western Africa.

On the walls, in the spaces between the long windows that open on both sides, admitting either sea or land breezes to refresh our frames, hung portraits of the different Germans who had ruled over the Dutch possessions in Western Africa. One very fine one of Colonel Shahrenberg I noticed. This officer was an intrepid explorer; and

he is the only European on record who ever attempted, with any kind of success, to penetrate the mysteries of the Sacred Prah—the Nile of Western Africa, inasmuch as there are as many different theories respecting its source as about the mighty Egyptian stream. The Prah, however, will be found to be but an arm of the Volta whenever European enterprise explores the regions now studiously kept from our knowledge by the jealousy of the Ashantee kings, and our own fears and silly dread of the much maligned climate of the interior of the Gold Coast. The portrait of a very dark gentleman, with a peaked beard and fierce eyes, especially attracted my attention, and this was—so tradition ran, the governor assured me—the semblance of Fernao Gomez, the reputed discoverer and founder of the noble pile we were now dining in. Our dinner was an exquisite one—more of the Parisian style about it, perhaps, than the feast of the preceding night; but in both cases I might say, "Lucullus supped with Lucullus." The wines were superb, the liqueurs rare and curious. Amsterdam and Java seemed to have been ransacked to furnish dainties, and the caviare which preceded and wound up the more solid part of the entertainment was a wonderful stimulant to indulgence in both senses. Asparagus preserved, and as fresh as though just culled, excited my wonder. I found we had much, very much, to learn if we would make any impression as colonists on the Coast; and old Hudibras' words about fortifying the stomach came forcibly to my recollection, when I contrasted the healthy visages and stalwart forms of my Dutch friends, who served for a period of twelve years on the Coast, often without any change, with the emaciated, fever-stricken, haggard countenances of my brother officers. Clearly, good food and drink had much to do with the matter; and another cause was that the Dutch remained on the Coast till they became acclimatized, whilst our people quitted it just as they were beginning to get over the seasoning fevers.

The number of dishes and various wines we had to discuss made the hours glide away insensibly: pleasant conversation too, and anecdotes of the Ashantee kings, beguiled us.

Mrs. Last having sent to remind us of our promise to visit her evening party, we rather unwillingly rose from table, and bade

his Excellency good night; the colonel laughingly warning us against the seductive wiles of the young ladies, who, finished coquettes, lured you on, and then laughed at your woes. But we were proof against all such Circes, we told him; though he evidently doubted the armour we boasted. Two of his staff, who had lately arrived from Holland, accompanied us; and one of them—a tall youth, with aristocratic features, and a name of old historic renown—soon showed by his attention to a young lady we had seen in the morning, standing at the gate of one of the largest houses, that he was not proof against her fascination. She was very pretty. Her skin was hardly darker than a light brunette in Europe; and her black silky hair was simply brushed off a fine forehead and tied behind, whence it fell down over her beautifully moulded shoulders and back. She was graceful, too, as a young fawn; and though the figures of an African dance, where the ladies are generally the sole performers, are slow and inexpressive enough—more so than those of an Indian nautch girl—yet she threw a grace and charm into her movements that excited general approval; and cambric handkerchiefs, highly perfumed, were thrown over her fair head in abundance by the young Africans who were in the room. This is the usual mode of making love; and a ring of value, brooch, or gold chain is often fastened to the mouchoir, as in the bouquets at the opera when thrown to a favourite singer or danseuse.

At length the fair performer sat down, but the decorum of African manners required her to take her place amongst the female part of the assembly, all of whom sat ranged on benches against the wall, and amongst whom were the singers (?) and musicians. This was the worst part of the whole; the noise they made being monotonous and disagreeable in the extreme, an accompaniment of castanets and clapping of hands hardly improving it.

Liquor was plentiful, and was liberally handed round; but of this we already had had full store; and there being no chance of a flirtation with the African belles, who were beset with dusky suitors who could speak their own tongue—an advantage we did not possess—we left for our domicile. A cool claret cup, and then we went to bed. Long ere the time the Africans call "cock speak," we were roused by our boys. Hammocks were ready waiting, and a motley

train of negroes, carrying our guns, &c., stood or squatted on their haunches outside. A smoking cup of coffee and a chasse of curaçoa, and we were off at a good swinging trot for Abuquamina, a shooting lodge fourteen miles from Elmina, and close to the Sweet River.

The road was tolerably good, over an undulating country; partridges were heard crowing on every side in the Cassada plantations, and a couple of patakoos who had been feeding on a dead body scampered out of a thicket, scared by the torches that some of our men bore in front. I rather regretted not getting a shot at these brutes, who have a strange, weird reputation, similar to the wehr-wolf of France and Germany. I believe the animal has a habit of walking erect on his hind legs. He has a great partiality for palm oil, and often attacks women who may be carrying it down to the Coast in the black earthen pots in which the oil is put up for transit and sale. One woman gravely asserted to me that she had seen the patakoo walk away with the pot on his head, supporting it with his forepaws.

We now got into a beautiful savannah, of about a couple of miles across. At the farther end rose some small, low ranges of hills, clothed with dense bush and tall trees—the odoom, African oak, silk-cotton, and cedar being very conspicuous. Here we determined to walk for a little, as there was a chance of some game; and ere long a native huntsman, who was creeping in front of us in the long grass, fired. In a moment—whirr, whirr on every side, and a covey of splendid grey partridges sprang into the air. I had not used my gun before—it was a breech-loader—but it came up well; and though I missed one bird from its being too close to me, I brought down my second bird with a shot through the head and wing. My companion missed both shots, from flurry and being unaccustomed to the close shooting of the breech-loading action.

The covey did not fly very far, and the old huntsman marked them down again. He had brought down his two birds in one sitting shot. The old fellow's limbs and body were scarred all over by gashes from tusks of wild boars and other animals he had killed. A deep bite from a huge black monkey was the worst; and he told us it had very nearly finished him. He had to cut the brute's throat, and all but sever the head from the body to get free from its grip.

As we were walking along in chase of the covey, some green pigeons came across in front; they ran the gauntlet, untouched, of all the guns but mine, and then, much to my delight, the foremost who had escaped previously dropped to my gun. I had hardly reloaded when from a small bush of grass, a few yards in front, an antelope sprang up, disturbed by our approach; and as it was on my side, I had it all to myself, bagging it with the second shot. The firing had, however, scared our covey of birds, and we did not again get within shot of them.

Soon after this we entered the forest; and as game is rarely fallen in with there, we got into our hammocks. The morning was delightful. Honeysuckle, jessamine, wild clematis, and passion flowers abounded, besides a variety of plants and shrubs as yet unclassified or unknown. Here a naturalist would go wild with delight, as he might continually find something fresh and rare. In some places a most exquisite perfume, as of crushed almonds, pervaded the air; and this, it seemed, proceeded from our hammock bearers treading on some low shrubs, that grew on the sides of the forest path.

All on a sudden there was a shouting and rushing of our people. The hammock men tore off at a frantic pace, slapping their thighs and calves with their hands, until one of the leaders tripping over a stump or root of a tree, we all came to the ground together, though, owing to the skill of one of the bearers, I escaped unhurt in the fall. My tumble brought the others in the rear down too; and when we got up all were covered with the travelling ants, who bit as fiercely as tigers. We had fallen in with a column of them, and hammocks and bearers were alike covered with the insects.

A general stampede took place, and we only halted breathless and laughing, some hundred yards from the spot. The pleasant sound of running water rippling over pebbles, or tumbling amongst large stones and falling into deep pools, now greeted our ears, and we saw through the dense forest the sparkle of the clear stream called the Sweet River, which debouches into the sea near Elmina. It was more than twenty yards wide where we had to cross. Large rocks and stepping stones facilitated our doing so, and the water was rather low. It was the first time since my arrival on the Coast that I had been near a running stream, and I almost worshipped it; laving my head and

hands, and drinking a copious draught from it, as it gurgled past me. My companions laughed at my enthusiasm, and warned me to retain a corner for something better.

As I raised my head from the water, I saw a hideous-looking reptile on a stone close by, intently watching me, and I shrank back in disgust. It leaped on to another stone, however, and with another spring reached the bank, where it disappeared. The natives burst out laughing at my terror: it was an iguana, a huge lizard, quite harmless, and much used in soups and stews by the natives, who carbonado the flesh by smoking it over a fire of fragrant smelling wood. A few more steps, and the crowing of cocks, sounds of children's and women's voices, laughing and shouting, announced our arrival at the kroom we were to visit. In a cleared glade of the forest, on a gentle slope, stood some dozen native huts, neatly whitewashed, and surrounded with gardens, fenced in by bamboo rails. There was a good broad road in front of this kroom, and on the other side lay the river. By some means it had been caused to expand into a kind of miniature lake; and here some dozen young girls were bathing, and little dark-skinned urchins leaping and frolicking about in their innocent childish glee.

Our arrival caused a general scare amongst the young ladies, some of whom fled to the cover of a neighbouring thicket, and others dived beneath the waters in affected terror. Our hammock men cracked some jokes in their own tongue as they trotted past the pool; and then turning into a long avenue, bordered with lime and orange trees in full bearing, amongst whose green leaves the golden fruit showed ripe and tempting, we found ourselves in front of a very pretty cottage ornée, half built of "sevish" and half of wood. It was very neatly thatched, and in front of it was a lawn, smooth as velvet, having been planted with Bahama grass, in the midst of which stood a gigantic silk-cotton tree; and here a table was laid out ready for breakfast, whilst American rocking and easy chairs were scattered about. As we got out of our hammocks, a grave, elderly gentleman, in green spectacles, greeted us; and but for his colour, and short, woolly hair, his voice might have led us to think him a well-bred Englishman.

"You are welcome, sir. Breakfast is ready; but if you wish to bathe before you

sit down to it, everything is prepared for you."

We had not had our bath that morning, so we begged, if it did not disturb his arrangements, that we might be allowed to wash first before sitting down to breakfast. We were accordingly led to our rooms, which were models of neatness, though the furniture was rustic in the extreme. Still, snowy sheets, and clean, new mats, with country cloths of many colours on our beds, over which hung mosquito-nets, quite charmed us. The rooms were unceiled, and the thatch was about two feet above the top of the wall. This was to admit air, and was a good precaution in a house where you have no chimneys. A large wooden bath, with two brass pans, one containing warm and the other cold water, and a small stool to sit on, about a dozen limes, a wisp of country sponge, a material made from the fibre of an African shrub, which is an excellent substitute for a scrubbing brush, with a huge lump of yellow soap, and we thought our lavatory arrangements were complete. Just, however, as we were about to disrobe, an old lady entered with a girl carrying another brasspan, full of some greenish fluid, which we might have taken for the top scum of a foul duck-pond. This was a grand African panacea against fever or bile. It was composed of a strong decoction of senna leaves, bruised and stewed. The women set down their burden, and after saying a few words to our domestic, to the purport that their master recommended us to try this, they departed. A good soaping and scrubbing with the fibrous material, after which we soaked ourselves in the duck-pond water, letting it dry on us; then a vigorous rubbing with limes; lastly, some cold water poured all over us, and we felt as refreshed and lively as young kids.

WINE FROM AN OLD BIN (1766),

BEING EXTRACTS FROM A MAGAZINE OF THAT DATE.

"AS Thomas Morrison, Esq., was riding out with some other gentlemen of Sunning, having dismounted to tighten his girths, before he was fixed on his saddle again his mare ran away with him, and, being in a narrow lane wherein was a loaded cart, struck with such violence against the end of it as to throw him over the load and over two of the horses, and pitched him on

his head; but he, having providentially a strong hunting cap on, received no further hurt than a violent strain in the foot that was in the stirrup. The girths were all broken, and the saddle thrown at a height in the air. The mare broke her chest bone, and died on the spot."

"Two chairmen, carrying a gentleman, who was intoxicated with liquor, from a tavern near Covent-garden, wilfully overturned the same, when they robbed him of nineteen guineas and his gold watch; but the gentleman alarming the watch, they were soon after taken, and carried before a magistrate, who committed them both to prison—viz., one to the Gatehouse, and the other to New Prison, Clerkenwell."

"Many counterfeit half-crown pieces are now circulating about town, which carry the mark of age, are well executed, but are only plated copper, of the dye of Charles II."

"BOSTON.—A number of vessels are arrived from their whaling voyages, which, in general, have not been very successful. One of them—viz., Capt. Clerk—on Thursday morning, the 25th ult., discovered a spermaceti whale near George's Banks, manned his boat, and gave chase to her; and she, coming up with her jaws against the bow of the boat, struck it with such violence that it threw a son of the captain's (who was forward ready with his lance) a considerable height from the boat; and when he fell, the whale turned with her devouring jaws opened, and caught him. He was heard to scream when she closed her jaws, and part of his body was seen out of the mouth when she turned and went off."

"Hitherto it has been imagined that water would not rise in an attracting pump higher than thirty-three feet; but, if we may believe letters from France, an artificer there making by chance a new aperture of about a line in length in the conducting tube at ten feet above the reservoir, he saw with surprise the water suddenly spring up to the height of sixty feet; and, on repeating the experiment, he found it constantly exact."

"A quantity of spurious saffron hay was offered for sale by a Jew, a few days ago, to a gentleman of the faculty in Newgate-street, who detained it; and, upon examination, found it to be for the most part, if not altogether, dried marigolds, which seem to have been steeped in an infusion of saffron, to give them the smell and colour of that drug, so that the imposition is not dis-

cernible either to the sight or smell; to the taste it is in some measure; but upon macerating it in water, the leaves spread open, and fairly discover the cheat. The tincture also which it gives is a deep red, instead of the beautiful yellow, which is the true characteristic of saffron."

"Tuesday night, between eight and nine o'clock, as Mr. George Griffin, a tide surveyor, was going from London to Blackwall, he was attacked by two footpads between Stepney and Poplar, who robbed him of a gold watch and his purse, in the latter of which was nearly four pounds."

"Wednesday a footpad stopped a young woman near the gallows, at Rumsford, in Essex, and robbed her of her red cloak and two shillings in money. After the robbery he saluted her, and, looking earnestly at the gallows, said it would not be long before he was hanged."

"Early on Wednesday morning last some villains broke into the shop of Mrs. Redman, milliner, in Thrift-street, Soho, and stole goods to the amount of sixty pounds. It is remarkable the watchman's stand was opposite the house."

"In consequence of an order that the heavy horse and dragoons should for the future be mounted on horses with their tails full grown, we are assured that the Marquis of Granby has signified his intention of presenting each quartermaster in the Royal regiment of Horse Guards, quartered in this city (of which he is colonel), with such a horse, having given orders to his dealer for that purpose."

"We are informed, from good authority, that Mr. Duncan, of Doncaster, mentioned in our last to be stopped by a footpad, was more frightened than he needed, the person he supposed to be a footpad being an honest journeyman flax dresser of this place, who was going to see his wife at Tadcaster, and, keeping the horse track as the cleanest part of the turnpike road, was met by Mr. Duncan, who insisted on his giving way, which he refused, and heaved his stick at the horse's head to make him turn out the path; on which Mr. Duncan asked him if he wanted to rob him, clapped spurs to his horse, and rode off."

"They write from Sens that a wall belonging to the old fortifications of that city having tumbled down, a passage was discovered leading to a vault filled with antique pieces of steel armour, richly gilt; imple-

ments of gold used by the heathens in their sacrifices; statues of false deities, of divers metals, curiously wrought; several urns and vases of porphyry, filled with gold medals and silver plates, ornamented with various inscriptions."

"A great man's porter, at the west end of the town, was heard yesterday to boast that he had got no less than seven pounds before twelve o'clock by sending up letters to his lord, and giving answers to a crowd of unfortunate dependants."

"Monday morning, between two and three o'clock, a person was observed to watch his opportunity of discharging musket balls from a steel cross-bow, at the two remaining heads upon Temple Bar. On his examination he affected a disorder in his senses, and said his reason for so doing was 'his strong attachment to the present Government, and that he thought it was not sufficient that a traitor should merely suffer death; that this provoked his indignation, and that it has been his constant nightly practice for three nights past to amuse himself in the same manner;' but it is much to be feared that he is a near relation to one of the unhappy sufferers."

"Last night, just as their Majesties came into Drury Lane Theatre to see the tragedy of 'Zara,' the celebrated John James Rousseau made his appearance in the upper box, over the stage box, fronting their Majesties. He was dressed in a foreign dress, and accompanied by Mr. H——. The crowd was so great on getting into the theatre that a great number of gentlemen lost their hats and wigs, and ladies their cloaks, bonnets, &c. There was a great disturbance in the upper gallery, at the above theatre, which prevented Mrs. Yates and Miss Plym from going on, just after they had opened the piece."

"Last Saturday a most curious experiment in electricity was performed by Mr. Spence, operator of teeth to his Majesty, before a number of gentlemen, on a woman belonging to St. Andrew's Workhouse above the Bars, who had for above six weeks lost her speech, and was troubled with terrible convulsive fits; when after two or three strokes in the mouth she recovered her speech, and the convulsive fits left her, to the astonishment of the gentlemen present."

"On Wednesday a fishmonger in Westminster was fined by a magistrate in the pe-

nalty of forty shillings, on the complaint of a housekeeper, for selling four Dutch plaice for turbot, and exacting a price accordingly."

"The country butchers, induced by the great price meat bears at Reading, have for some weeks past carried veal to that market with intent to sell it by the joint at 3½d. a pound (being on an average 1d. in a pound less than it sold for there); but some butchers of the town, getting information thereof, frustrated their intentions, and bought the carcasses whole, and afterwards disposed of them at their own market price. It is, however, hoped that such unlawful practices will soon be brought under proper cognizance, and the persons guilty meet with their deserts."

"On Monday, at the races at Ascot, his Royal Highness Prince Henry Frederick, youngest brother to his Majesty, by riding against a chain, which he did not perceive, was thrown from his horse; he was immediately bled, and carried to Windsor Lodge, where he rested tolerably well, and on Tuesday morning his Highness was in a fair way of recovery."

"An ingenious gentleman has invented a method of rendering the most stinking meat sweet, wholesome, juicy, and as fit to eat as if it had been killed but three days, even after it has been long voyages on board his Majesty's ships for several years, or kept in East India ships during the longest voyages; which experiment has been tried to the satisfaction of several gentlemen belonging to the East India Company."

"The barber who had the honour to let his Royal Highness Prince Henry's blood last Monday, when the accident happened, there being no surgeon on the spot, has received a handsome present."

"The public may be assured of the authenticity of the Patagonians being as tall a people as has been represented—viz., between eight and nine feet high. As a corroboration, one of the ship's people brought home with him a skeleton of one of their hands, which measured sixteen inches from the joint of the wrist to the finger's end, and every way large in proportion. Their children are five feet high at two years old; and their women are adorned with bracelets of gold. They do not inter their dead, but by a preparation eat off the flesh, and hang the bones in a box up in a tree, many of which were

seen, and might easily have been brought away."

"A lady well known in the literary world, who intends after her decease to be dissected and anatomized, hath lately had made an elegant mahogany case, richly adorned with emblems of death, in which her skeleton is to be kept. The above case, it is said, cost upwards of £50."

"Last week an officer of the G—ds went to poach, with two favourite dogs, upon a gentleman's estate in Surrey, where he had not been long when the gentleman's servant came riding up to him, and told him, in a very civil manner, that his master ordered him to shoot his dogs, for which he hoped he would not blame him, as he was only a servant. The officer said he would not; upon which the man dismounted, and shot one of the dogs. At that very instant he heard an explosion behind him, and upon turning about, was surprised to find his horse lying dead on the ground, after being shot through the skull by the officer, who told him that that was horse for dog, but the next should be man for dog; upon which the servant thought proper to walk home to his master, without attempting to shoot the other dog, which, it seems, was a greater favourite of the officer's than that which was killed."

"Nottingham, Oct. 3.—Yesterday arrived here a party of light horse from Derby, which the mayor had procured from thence to quell a great body of people which had the preceding night taken from the farmers about ten tons of cheese (it being a great market for that article). As soon as the evening closed, a great number of people gathered in the market-place, and immediately went to the mayor's house and broke his doors and windows; upon which he ordered the light horse to arms. Accordingly, the drum beat, and in a few minutes formed in the market-place, on which the populace pelted them with stones very severely. The necessary forms being read, and all persuasions to disperse them being fruitless, he ordered the men to fire; accordingly they did, with only powder, which so frightened them that they dispersed. One of the soldiers had inadvertently loaded with ball, which being fired at random, broke a farmer's leg as he lay upon some cheese, and hurt another in the ankle."

"At Nuneaton, Warwickshire, the following accident happened to one of the most

active of the mob in this place:—The house of a widow, who kept about ten cows, and depended on the sale of her cheese for the support of her family, and to pay her landlord, was entered in a riotous manner, and the cheese thrown down the stairs, which by that means were made greasy; when the rioter, in coming down, slipped, and fell from top to bottom, and was killed on the spot: at which the mob were so much surprised, that they dispersed without taking any of the cheese with them."

"Extract of a letter from Surrey, Sept. 8. —'A wicked custom has of late years prevailed in our country to oppress the poor. The millers in general will not grind a bushel of wheat, unless they take from six to twelve pounds toll, and so in proportion for all grain. The farmer will not sell poor families small quantities of wheat, or grains for hogs, because all shall buy of the miller, or his tool the shopkeeper, bread, flour, pork, and bacon. These two men in each district mostly govern the officers of every parish, by their money and dealings with them. They buy and sell all by samples; and if the farmer has any bad wheat or grain, the miller takes it and mixes it with the good; so the poor have them thus mixed at the highest price. Wheat was last week sold at eight guineas per load, nine gallons measure, and those very men sell a gallon loaf (a half peck) at thirteen pence, eight gallons measure to a bushel, and every bushel of wheat produces eleven gallons of flour, or more. The only remedy would be, that no corn shall be sold but in public markets, and no miller permitted to buy or sell wheat, flour, or bread; then the mealman will be on the fair trade with all alike, and bad corn be sold as such. Bad flour has brought in the use of alum everywhere, to the great prejudice of people's healths, especially of children. One pound of wheat is enough for the toll of grinding one bushel, and so in proportion. Till these abuses are removed by an act of Parliament, the poor will never be redressed."

THE MAN ON THE CLIFF.

THE circumstances of this story can, I have no doubt, be scientifically explained; but I do not pretend so to explain them. I can merely relate the events as they occurred to me, leaving the reader to form his own judgment, scientific or otherwise, upon the narrative.

In the summer of 186—, an unusually warm and dry one it was, I remember, I had occasion to visit the north coast of Spain for professional reasons. I am a painter, and I started off to ramble the best way I liked to the sunny land—through Paris, the gay city of pleasure; through the fertile plains of Languedoc to the west, and to the Pyrenees, which towered almost above my head, reflecting the last gleams of a setting sun in tints of gorgeous splendour, as I sighted the little town of Bayonne one summer's evening. On through Biarritz to quaint St. Jean de Luz, nestling at the foot of the mountains, with the melodious sound of sheep-bells far up on the heights floating on the evening air, and the lights from the cottage windows dotting the hillside like distant glowworms in a forest of embosoming green.

I was loath to leave this sweet spot, with the quaint costumes and kindly peasantry; for I had spent a very happy time in that border-town of France, once renowned in history, now slumbering in oblivion, with the memories of the past only clinging to its grey walls. But I had to see another country, and my time was short; so one morning I left the slumbering town far behind me, and had at last started on my onward and upward journey across the Pyrenees.

I will say little of the difficulties and trials of patience which ensued during those weary hours. Happy was I when, skirting Irun, I entered Spanish territory, and drove at nightfall into the town of San Sebastian. The reader will probably inquire why I am dragging him in detail through scenes with which he is probably as familiar as myself; but the object I have in view is to show how indisposed my mind was at this time to any supernatural impression. This must be clearly understood. And now for my story.

I had finally left San Sebastian, and settled myself and my belongings in a small fishing village about fifteen miles to the west, where I had arrived early on a clear summer's morning at the end of July. As I intended to stay here some little time, I was employed for a few days in putting my various little impedimenta into something like order—which, after the desultory habits I had acquired since leaving England, was not an easy task; but I soon found myself fairly settled and comfortable in a small but

clean cottage, on the summit of a cliff commanding a fine and uninterrupted view of the sea.

I was never tired of admiring the gorgeous sunsets, which I think I have rarely seen in my travels to such perfection as on that lonely coast; and evening after evening would I walk out from my dwelling, and linger until the rosy tints mellowed to a saffron hue, and then changed slowly to a pale golden sky, through which the stars, as with a timid gaze, appeared one by one, but dimly, until the twilight fell upon the calm sea.

One afternoon, it was the 19th of August—I remember the day distinctly, as I have every reason to do—I had wandered farther than was my habit—far out along the cliffs, watching the ever-varying features of the ocean, and wondering at the strange aspect of the sky. The clouds seemed torn asunder, as if in long wreaths of dusky smoke, and the dying light of the setting sun was obscured by dark, angry-looking banks of vapour, that appeared to come out from westward, farther than the eye could reach.

I was so attracted by the unusual aspect of the elements, and my own thoughts—which were pleasant ones—that I did not notice the sudden darkness that was rapidly setting in, although it was not yet seven o'clock. As soon, however, as I perceived it—with a thought of my own folly for having come so far, and being so unprepared for rough weather—I determined to retrace my steps with all the speed in my power; and, strapping my painting traps upon my back again, I turned for home.

Down from the place where I stood, the cliff fell sheer half way to the beach; then rocks of great magnitude ran along its base, and extended far into the sea, presenting a grand and terrible sight, as the angry waves dashed over them, throwing up feathery spray high into the air.

As I turned to leave the spot, I was suddenly startled by a very distant sound, proceeding apparently from far out to sea. It seemed like the faint beat of a drum, rising and falling with the strength of the wind, and strangely mingling with the roar and dash of the waves upon the shore.

Although it was dark for that time of the evening, I could yet plainly discern the entire surface of the ocean, and not a trace of a vessel of any description was there in

sight. Puzzled by this mysterious occurrence, but thinking it was most probably caused by the action of the water upon some subterranean cavern, I was once more about to battle my way against the tumultuous wind homewards, when it appeared to me that the sound was approaching nearer—nearer, floating across the dark, troubled waters in a prolonged roll, as from a great number of drums. They were beating what seemed to be the call to quarters, from some unknown ship; for, look as I might, not a vestige of one was to be seen upon the ocean.

As it came nearer—not five hundred yards apparently from where I stood—I distinctly heard the single and double beat, and all the varied sounds produced by the drummer's art; but still this awful fact: I was compelled to acknowledge there was no ship in sight, and the sound sprang as from the bosom of the waters! As I stood spellbound, with all my nerves stretched to a full tension, and my gaze eagerly fixed on the sea beneath my feet, I felt a strange feeling coming over me, as though *something* were behind or at my side. At first, if my life had depended upon it, I could not have had the power of will or body to turn round. A strange terror had overcome me, and my feet appeared to be rooted to the ground; but at length, with a strong effort of determination, I turned, and beheld a sight that filled me with horror. A gleam of the watery moon now stole out from behind a cloud, and disclosed the dark figure of a man, or what seemed to be a man, standing erect, but in an attitude of expectancy, on the verge of the cliff. From whence he had appeared, and when, I was quite unable to say, as I had not noticed his presence before, but he stood there, wrapped in an old-fashioned mantle of some dark material, with his head bent downwards, so that I could see nothing as yet of his face.

Suddenly, the roll of the drum recommenced, and, with a quick motion of his head, he gazed long and earnestly out to sea.

Never shall I forget that face. To this moment I can recall no individual feature but his eyes. There are times, indeed, when you are quite unable to take in, as it were, more than one particular in a mass of events; and it was so now. I can distinctly remember this man's eyes, for they were remarkably bright and glowing; what the rest

of his face resembled I cannot tell, already was I so confused as to external appearances and sensations. Suddenly I saw, moving from the shadowy mist which now almost covered the ocean, the outline of a large and stately vessel, gliding almost imperceptibly through the water, but displaying no signs of vitality, except the prolonged roll of the drum, which rang out with startling effect upon the still night air. As I noted its quiet onward progress, I saw for the first time, to my horror, that she was steering straight upon the reef which lay along the cliffs at my feet.

I tried in vain to call loudly, to warn those on board of her; but my voice died in my throat, and, do what I could, I was unable to bring forth a sound. In an agony of fear, turning towards the figure at my side, I saw him standing on the edge of the cliff, holding at arm's length above his head a great light, which flickered fitfully over the troubled sea below.

Nearer came the phantom ship, until the bow of the vessel almost touched the rocks, when, throwing off the horrid spell that like a nightmare had bound me up to this time, I cast myself in front of the mysterious figure, and in my terror tried to arrest his attention by grasping the long cloak, which, blown backward and forward by the wind, had almost touched my face as I stood.

Then for the first time I knew he became aware of my presence, and, before I could prepare myself for resistance, he had thrown himself upon me. The next moment we were struggling together upon the very verge of the cliff. In vain did I exert all my strength, which is not inconsiderable, to shake off his grasp; for it was as of iron, and I felt helpless as a child in his embrace. This could not go on for long. Already I felt sick and giddy; a few more seconds and I should have lost my senses. At length, with a vigorous and last effort, I threw off my antagonist, who, missing his precarious footing upon the crumbling cliff, disappeared suddenly, as if the black night had finally engulfed him. Then I seemed to hear voices, and a grinding crash—but afar off, mistily, as from another world; for I felt that I was rapidly growing unconscious, my senses were leaving me, and, although I knew it not, I must have swooned.

It was several weeks before I recovered

consciousness. When I did so, I found myself in my own room, weak and prostrate, after a sharp attack of brain fever, through which my old Madoline nursed me with a devotion I shall never forget. It was to her, indeed, that I am indebted for my life; for I was as helpless as a child for many a long week after that memorable evening.

It was a long time before I regained sufficient strength to walk by myself on the breezy cliffs in the search of health; and it was during my tardy convalescence that I heard the following story, of which I give the outline, from Madoline; and as it throws some little light on the strange events which I have endeavoured to relate, I will give it here as briefly as I can.

About a hundred and fifty years before this time, there was a lonely cottage standing high upon the hillside, in such a desolate part of the country that no tenant had been prevailed upon to stay in it for any length of time, and the walls were left to tumble to ruins, which they did very effectually as years rolled on and it still remained empty.

One day it was rumoured in the village that a peasant, passing the cottage the previous night, had seen a light in the dilapidated windows, and the dark figure of a man standing behind it, looking out to sea. This rumour did not prove unfounded, as a stranger was observed day after day, but generally towards the evening, wandering along the cliff—now far away from the village, now close to it; but always with his eyes—and wonderful eyes they were described to be—fixed eagerly upon the sea beneath his feet.

Months went on like this, and the summer days succeeded each other with eventless regularity, when one dark night in the middle of August, as the villagers were talking over the sleepy events of the sleepy day in the little Fonda, the best the town could produce, Miguel Herrera, one of Madoline's ancestors she used to tell me, burst in upon their startled senses, as white as a sheet, and trembling with fear. It was some time before the poor lad was sufficiently restored to give any intelligible explanation of his terror. When he had recovered his senses, which were never of the brightest at the best of times, he made the following extraordinary statement.

That evening, he said, he had been passing along the upper edge of the cliff, and he was astonished to see the beacon extinguished which generally marked the opening in the dangerous line of reefs, and an almost perfect darkness prevailing around. Thinking perhaps it was owing to some carelessness of the lantern-keeper, he was about to ascend to his cottage and rate him for his negligence, when the distant sound of a drum coming over the surface of the ocean startled him; and as he knelt to peer over the cliff, he dimly made out the form of a large, totally dismantled vessel, from which the roll of drums was proceeding, being driven bows on toward the shore; but to his horror she was apparently being steered, as far as it lay in the helmsman's power, straight for the reef, instead of towards the opening lower down. Looking farther, he saw at once the explanation of this fatal error: the light was shining brightly, but not above the haven of safety. Over the deadly reef gleamed the treacherous beacon, and on came the ill-fated vessel.

Full of horror at the mysterious occurrence, he hastened down towards the lantern; but before he could get within hail there was a grinding crash, a shriek, and all was still. Then he came to us—how, he knew not, for it was a considerable way, and he was almost paralyzed with fear. Next morning the fragments of a great wreck strewed the shore for miles, and a great number of bodies, evidently English sailors from a man-of-war, were thrown up on many parts of the coast. As for the stranger, he was seen no more. What awful secret the shadow of that night concealed will never be known to mortal man; but Madoline told me, with an awe-stricken voice, that not a soul had dared to approach that part of the cliff upon the 19th of August for their very lives within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. It was an accursed day, it was an accursed spot; and I, the Englishman, had first dared to venture—with what results? This she would ask me, and cross herself with a truly religious fervour when she did so. The secret, whatever it was—and it was a dark one of by-gone ages—lay between that man on the cliff, and the captain of the ill-starred vessel. What it may have been that provoked such a diabolical revenge I cannot tell, though it is a mystery which one fain would unravel.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN an out-of-the-way place like Dumferryghalee, each day bears a strong resemblance to its fellow: describe one, and you have traced the likeness of them all. There will be exceptions, of course, but of such unfrequent occurrence that they are talked of and remembered for years, if not for generations, when they do take place.

Such were the festivities at the castle, six months after Sir John Middleton's arrival in the country.

In spite of his daughter's assertion that she would not be immured for any length of time in Ultima Thule, six months were spent by the baronet in absolute retirement at Ardmore. Several of the neighbouring families, including the St. Clairs, of course, had called and left cards; but no one had succeeded in gaining admittance to the house.

Until the full year of mourning for his late wife had expired, Sir John had persistently refused to visit or be visited; but it was well understood that as soon as that period had elapsed the gates were to be thrown open, and a series of rejoicings take place in honour of his succession to the title and estates; and a vast deal of speculation was indulged in throughout the country as to the future movements of father and daughter, who were never seen abroad except when in attendance on Divine service in the parish church, where they were regular and, to all appearance, attentive listeners.

"If Richard were only a few years older," sighed the Lady Georgina when discussing the question of the day with her husband; but he was too hopelessly young to presume to offer himself as Miss Middleton's suitor.

"Sir John is not so very old, my dear," rejoined the vicar. "He cannot be much more than sixty, and is hale and hearty, with a constitution like a lion. Who knows—he might marry again."

"Very true," acquiesced her ladyship; "and Louisa is not unattractive."

Mr. St. Clair shook his head.

"I wish she were more like what you were, my dear: no man could resist the power of her charms."

Her ladyship affected to be angry, but in

reality was vastly pleased; but it was rather too soon to speculate; nevertheless, they determined to closely watch the course of events, and be ready to act as occasion might require.

In the meantime, poor afflicted Mrs. Woodward remained in a state of apathetic dejection, from which no efforts on the part of friends or acquaintances could arouse her; and the painful estrangement that already existed between her husband and herself grew gradually wider, until at last they seldom met, and were the subject of much uncharitable comment, not only in the parish, but in the district at large—chiefly, I imagine, through the instrumentality of their servant, Margery M'Anvil, whose influence over her mistress increased day by day.

On the occasion of the opening of Ardmore House to the public, at the termination of the baronet's year of seclusion and mourning, it had been arranged that a number of deputations were to proceed to the castle with addresses of congratulation; and much wrath was excited when it became known that the Papists also intended to present themselves.

The rector, too, on the preceding Sunday, preached an inflammatory sermon, in which he compared the Romish deputationists to the evil angel, who had not shrunk, in view of the better accomplishment of his sinister purposes, from presenting himself among his sons before the very throne of the Most High.

Poor fellow! he had better have had his tongue cut out than have preached that inflammatory sermon, as it seemed to me; but, after all, it was but adding one more shovelful of coal to the already overflowing furnace of Protestant wrath and jealousy.

For the first time since her bereavement, Mrs. Woodward made her appearance in public at the castle rejoicings, where she acted the part of the skeleton at the Egyptian feast to perfection.

I was astounded when I saw her walk into the ball-room, dressed in complete mourning, and I think every one present was as much amazed as I was. Indeed, she had remained in such perfect seclusion for so many months, that she had been almost forgotten; and her sudden reappearance on such an occasion, and in such a costume, astonished all, and not a little frightened many who saw her. I did not venture to look at the rector for some

minutes after the startling apparition entered the room; but, when I at last did so, no trace of emotion was visible. His face was deadly pale, but perfectly impassive.

Miss Middleton was not directly aware of the new arrival's identity; but, as soon as she heard she was the rector's wife, she advanced to meet her, and, taking her hand, led her to a sofa in a recess at the opposite end of the room, where she had been sitting with Emma—whom I immediately, at her own unspoken request, led to another part of the room.

The contrast between the two ladies, as they walked, hand in hand, from one end of the ball-room to the other, was as great as it could possibly be. Miss Middleton was dressed in a robe of pink moiré antique, and a profusion of lace. She wore a complete parure of pearls, and looked an empress; while poor Mrs. Woodward, short-sighted and wrinkled, and rouged to excess, was, as I have said, dressed in the most complete mourning.

"Poor thing!" sighed Emma, alluding to the rector's wife—"she must be out of her senses. Only think of coming here by herself, and dressed in such a manner, after distinctly refusing the invitation."

Shortly after this, supper was announced, and Miss Middleton, beckoning me across the room, said—

"Will you hand Mrs. Woodward in to supper?"

I accepted the charge, and on our way to the dining-room ventured to remark—

"It is quite a surprise, Mrs. Woodward, to see you here to-night."

"Yes," she replied; "but I felt so lonely at home, I thought I would be driven over, and see what they were doing here; and I am glad now I came."

"That's right," I replied. "It will do you good. What will you take?"

"Nothing," she answered. "But, doctor, there is no use in keeping things from you. I was dared to come."

"Dared to come! What for? By whom?" I exclaimed.

"No matter, doctor. But I was dared to come and see my husband making love to another woman: that is the true reason why I am here. But it is false: she is a good, kind young creature, and I have begged her pardon for suspecting her."

"Good gracious, Mrs. Woodward!" I exclaimed—for I was so taken by surprise, I

knew not what to say, and I felt that Miss Middleton was watching us. "You surely never—"

"Yes, I did," continued the poor mad woman, for such I felt certain she must be. "I was dared to come here: I came: and it is not so bad as I thought, and was led to expect."

"Who dared you?"

"No matter. I shall not tell you," she said.

"Was it Charles?"

"No matter: but no, it was not."

I was more and more puzzled.

"Whoever told you, told you an untruth," I said.

"Yes, I am aware of that now. But I am glad I came: I feel better than I have done for a long time. However, I am certain of one thing—which is, that she loves him still. He also loves her—he cannot help it, poor fellow; and I am the only obstacle in the way of their coming together! But my mind is made up. It will be better for us all."

"But, Mrs. Woodward—" I began, but was interrupted by Miss Middleton, near to whom we were seated, calling out—

"I hope you are taking care of Mrs. Woodward, doctor?"

"Yes, thank you," replied the rector's wife, almost closing her eyes as she slowly turned them in the direction of our hostess; "I am doing very well."

My neighbour, Mr. Twaddell, addressed me at the same moment:

"I say, doctor, do you know anything about cows?"

"Not much," I replied.

"I mean in the way of doctoring them, you know," explained the farmer."

I shook my head.

"I am not a veterinary."

As Miss Middleton then rose, the ladies and some of the gentlemen returned to the ball-room, and I had not an opportunity of renewing my interrupted conversation with the rector's wife, about whom I was beginning to feel extremely uneasy.

CHAPTER XXX.

I HAVE omitted to mention that my brother-in-law, Robert M'Lachlan, then assistant-surgeon in the —th Dragoons, had run down to pay us a visit a few days before the celebrations at the castle, where he was one of the invited guests, and had danced

once with Miss Middleton and several times with Louisa St. Clair.

On the morrow of the ball we were all of us rather late, but Robert especially so; and when he did make his appearance, he looked so miserable and woe-begone that I asked him if he had seen a ghost; and his sister exclaimed—

"What is the matter with you, Robert? Are you ill?"

Nearly two years had elapsed since I had last seen him; and when he dropped in on us, quite unexpectedly, I scarcely recognised him, he was so changed—for the worse, I thought. Emma, however, considered him improved.

The fact was, he was not one bit like the boy I had known and loved so well; whose handsome face, seen day by day, had fostered my nascent love for the fair unknown; whose passing image would otherwise, doubtless, have speedily faded from my recollection. Apollo had given place to Bacchus, whose tawny fell would have done credit to a lion. Yes, he was sadly changed—in my eyes, at least, if not in those of others.

Nevertheless, he was a noble-looking man. His figure, perhaps, was a trifle too massive, and his beard a shade too red; but in disposition he was just the same as ever—as jovial, as careless, and as free; so that more than one pair of bright eyes followed him with admiration as he moved through the intricate mazes of the dance.

Miss Middleton, I noticed, watched him closely, but more closely still did Miss St. Clair; who, on ordinary occasions the liveliest of the lively and gayest of the gay, was that evening reduced to nearly absolute dumbness.

"What is the matter, Robert?—are you ill?" asked his sister next morning, when he came down late to a late breakfast, looking so unlike himself that I could not keep myself from staring at him.

"Matter?" he answered, trying to rouse himself. "Nothing. I'm tired, that's all."

"You tired, Bob!" I exclaimed, laughing. "You are a pretty fellow to go through the fatigues of a campaign, if one night's dancing tires you!"

"Tell you what, old chap," he replied, "I would a deuced sight sooner go through a campaign, as you call it, than such another night as last."

"Have you seen a ghost?"

"No—I leave that to you."

"Well, then, what is the matter with you? Are you ill? Have some soda water?"

"And brandy? No, thanks."

"I didn't say anything about brandy."

"Does your head ache?" asked my wife.

"Rather."

"You have been lying awake all night—or, at least, dreaming of the lovely Louisa," I said, hazarding a guess.

He turned crimson. I had hit the right nail on the head, it seemed.

"Louisa! is that her name?"

"Yes. Isn't it a pretty one?"

"Not as pretty as she is."

"Oh, Bob!" exclaimed my wife, clapping her hands, "you are in love! I am sorry, though, I can't give my unqualified approval to your choice."

"Why not?"

"I don't admire your taste."

"Which only shows that yours is nothing to go by," he replied, emptying the sugar basin into his cup.

"She is a good girl, though, Emma," I said, pitying the poor fellow, "if she is no beauty. Handsome is that handsome does, Bob, my boy. I've no doubt she'll make you a capital wife. I saw last night she was thoroughly smitten."

"I thought the same," said my wife; "but I had no idea Bob responded. I suppose her father will give her a fortune?"

"He may," I replied; "but there are so many of them."

"Are there?" asked Robert, looking up in evident surprise. "I thought she was an only daughter. But I'm glad to hear that, for I was afraid of being thought mercenary, and that was one thing that has worried me."

"Well, set your mind at rest on that score, old fellow—you'll not be overburdened with wealth, I'm sure. When do you propose to the lady? Or have you done so already?"

"Don't bother. Can't you let a fellow eat his breakfast? Dou you really think, though—do you really think—"

"That you have made an impression?" I said, pitying his confusion, and helping him. He nodded.

"I do. I am sure you did. You have nothing to do but to ask and have. The young lady is of a particularly plastic nature."

"She has had more than one affaire de

cœur since we've been here," maliciously added his sister, "so that if you had not responded, she would not have broken her heart, I dare say. Is not that a comfort?"

"Come, I say, Emma, you are jealous of her, and want to tease me."

Emma laughed.

"Why, Tom knows it as well as I do. Don't you, Tom?"

"Yes—that is to say, I'm sure I don't know. I never took much notice—not feeling interested, you understand."

"Of course, I understand well enough. Emma always did delight in annoying me," snarled her brother. "Tell you what, ma'am—if it hadn't been for me, you'd never have been where you are now."

"I know that, Bob, dear," exclaimed my wife, getting up and kissing her brother on the brow, and me on the top of the head as she returned to her seat.

"Well, then, don't you go making fun of a fellow, for I'm in earnest this time, 'pon my soul."

"No need to swear about it, Bob. I wish you joy, old fellow, if you are really serious; and I'm sure it will be all plain sailing with you, for the lady is willing; and as to papa and mamma, they'll snap you up as a dolphin does a flying fish."

"Mamma!" exclaimed Robert. "I understood her mother was dead."

"Not she: that is, unless she died last night."

"The lady in the pale blue satin and ostrich feathers," explained my wife.

"Oh," said Bob, "is that her mother?"

"Yes, your mother-in-law that is to be, it seems."

"Never mind, it aint her I want to marry, thank goodness. There isn't the least resemblance between them, anyway that I can see."

"Not much, certainly; and, with all her faults, I am sure Louisa is good-natured, and I know she is kind to the poor."

"Thank you for saying that, Emma," replied her brother, with emotion. "It's too serious a matter to make fun of."

"So it is, Robert," I answered—"so it is, old fellow; and though I could have wished you better, still, after all, you might have done worse. But does it not seem rather sudden?"

"Sudden! It don't fit you to talk about suddenness, who fell in love with a girl from

once passing her on the road, and never laid eyes on her again for months."

"Ay, but I had her living image continually before my eyes all the time, you must remember."

"Can you lend me your horse by and by?"

"To be sure. Do you know the way to the house?"

"Do I know the way? Of course I do."

I supposed the lady had given him directions, and said no more.

"You won't go till after dinner, Bob, I suppose?" said my wife.

"Certainly not," I answered for him. "She will not have recovered from the fatigue of last night before the afternoon, and would never forgive him for catching her en déshabille."

"I think she'd even get over that, for the sake of a husband," asserted my wife.

"Jealous again!"

"Not I, Bob—except, perhaps, on your account, dear; for, honestly, I do not think she is quite good enough for you. If it had been Augusta—"

"Augusta who?"

"St. Clair."

"I don't know that I saw her."

"Yes, you did, Bob, and danced with her."

"Did I? Perhaps I did. But really I don't remember any one, or anything, except—"

"Except the one—eh? Bob, Bob, you are awfully far gone!"

"I dare say—but I want to be goner."

"To be what?"

"To be sure of my fate, one way or the other."

"Then you have not proposed?"

"No."

"You need not be uneasy about the result, old boy, I can tell you."

"Do you think so?"

"I do, indeed. If you had not been blind, you'd have seen the eyes she made at you all the evening, as well as we did."

"She has the finest eyes I ever saw in my life," exclaimed the infatuated young man.

"Rather small, I think," observed my wife.

"Small!" exclaimed her brother. "If you call them small, what in the world do you call large?"

"Say no more, Emma, my dear," I inter-

posed. "The poor fellow is done for. What will his mother say?"

"Say!" he exclaimed; "she'll be of the same mind as I am when she sees her; and if she isn't, I'll soon work her round, never fear. What time are you going to dine to-day?"

"The same hour as usual," replied my wife—"two o'clock; so you will have time to think this matter well over again before you start."

Robert blew his nose in a demonstrative fashion, but made no reply.

Our servant came in just then with a message:

"A woman," she said, "has brought a red line for the master."

"Where to?" I asked.

"Here it is," replied the domestic, holding out the document in question, much crumpled up, and extremely dirty in appearance.

"Give it here, Jane. Dear me—dear me!" I exclaimed when I had looked at it—"it is to Ballynacarberry! I'm afraid, Bob, I can't let you have the horse to-day: it's twelve miles from this, and an awful road."

"Never mind, Tom. I dare say it won't take me very long to walk."

"An hour and three-quarters, or half, if you go very fast."

"I shall run."

"Don't do that, Robert," advised my wife; "for if you do, you'll put yourself in a heat, and won't look to half your natural advantage."

"Bother natural advantage!" he exclaimed, passing the fingers of his left hand carefully through his hair. "That's what you call sisterly affection, I suppose, chaffing a fellow for sailing in the same boat with yourself? Tell you what, Emma," he went on, earnestly, "it is unkind of you. I never made fun of you when you were in love with your husband."

"You are a good boy, Robert," replied his sister, "and I beg your pardon if I've hurt your feelings; but let me beg of you to think over this before you irrevocably commit yourself."

"Ay," said I, "be careful, Bob; wait awhile, and see whether your present red-hot ardour does not cool down."

"Never!" he exclaimed, forcibly, dashing his hand upon the table, and knocking off a plate, which was broken in pieces. "A bad

omen," he said, half to himself, as he stooped to pick up the fragments.

I could not help smiling, and said—

"You need have no fear of being refused, Bob, if you will persist in proposing. They will jump at you, and gobble you up; and if you should cool, and want to back out by and by, they'll be sure to 'breach' you, to a certainty."

"Particularly her ladyship," confirmed my wife.

Whereupon Robert got up from the table, and left the room, shutting the door audibly—too audibly for sensitive ears—behind him.

I rang the bell, and gave orders to bring round the horse.

In about a quarter of an hour Jane returned, saying—

"The car is at the door, if you please, sir."

"Dear me!" I exclaimed, "I did not order the car. I couldn't get it up Maloney's lane if I was to try. Tell Isaac to saddle the horse, and put the car up again. He just wants to get out of planting those cabbages. Tell him to make haste."

"I am very sorry for Robert," sighed my wife as I was waiting for my steed to be brought round. "I do not like Louisa. If it had even been her sister."

"She is very young."

"Eighteen or nineteen," affirmed my wife; "and I don't suppose they would want to be married directly."

"Bob seems very ardent," I replied. "Now, had it been Miss Middleton—"

"I don't think she'd have anything to say to him, Tom."

"Why not? He's a splendid-looking young fellow."

"So he is; but she is so much older."

"No doubt; but she does not look her age, and he would pass for five or six years older than he really is."

Here Jane reappeared, and announced that the horse was at the door.

"Thanks."

Jane retired.

"Good bye, dearest," I said, kissing my wife. "Try what you can do with Bob. If you could get him to put it off for a week. But take him as quietly as you can."

The day was fine, if the way was long and rough, and I reached the remote township, or townland, of Ballynacarberry in due course of time—that is to say, in about an

hour and a half; for the road was uphill—and very steep hills, too, some of them—all the way, and I was compelled to walk my horse a very considerable portion of the distance.

On my arrival at the house—or cottage, rather—I found my patient in a very precarious state, and was obliged to remain between two and three hours with her before I could venture to leave her with safety.

After a while, however, she rallied; and, giving the women who were with her full directions as to what they were to do, I turned my horse's head homewards, much pondering upon my brother-in-law's unaccountable choice, and wondering how he had sped with his wooing.

No, not wondering, for I had no doubt as to its issue, but regretful that he should have decided as he had done; for I had secretly laid out quite another plan of action for him, which I had hoped to have seen carried out some day, and thought feasible enough, imagining that every one saw him with the same doubtless partial eyes that I did; and I was disappointed, not to say annoyed, for no one likes to be out-generaled—at least, I never did.

On reaching home, I found Isaac waiting for me at the door. I gave him the reins, and hurried in, anxious to know the result of Robert's visit to Moighrath, where I had little doubt he had been, and whence I thought it possible he might have returned, as the day was wearing out.

I found my wife in the parlour with our two little ones; and, after kissing them, asked—

"What news?"

"Robert has come back."

"Well?"

"She has refused him."

"You don't say so! Well, I am glad. Where is he?"

"He is shut up in his room, Tom, stamping up and down like a madman, and says he will be off to town as soon as he has seen you."

"Well, to be sure! I am surprised, though. Did he tell you any particulars?"

"No; but when I saw him come back so soon—he was not above an hour gone—I knew there must be something wrong, and I only said—

"Well, Robert, how did you get on?"

"I'm done for," was the answer he gave

me. I asked him what he meant, and he said—

"I have got the sack, and such a sacking! and it's all your fault and Tom's for deceiving me."

"What did you say then?" I asked of my wife.

"I asked him to tell me what had happened more particularly; but he refused, merely repeating that it was all our fault; that we had made him too sure of victory; and that his assumption had offended the lady, and caused her to give him the abrupt dismissal he had received."

"He is up in his room, you say?"

"Yes, walking up and down like a madman. He made so much noise that he woke the children, and I had to bring them down here out of the nursery."

"Poor little darlings!" I said. "I'll go up and speak to him, dear."

I went, and found the door locked.

"Hallo, Bob," I said, "let me in!"

He opened the door. I went into the room, and found the poor fellow most terribly cut up.

"It was all your confounded talk," he said, angrily, "that did for me, by making me think too much of myself."

"Never mind, old fellow, you'll get over it; and, to tell you the truth, I am heartily glad it has ended as it has, for you were throwing yourself away. If it had been Miss Middleton, now—"

"It was Miss Middleton!"

"Phe-w!"

VERSICLES.

THERE was a young lady of Bocking,
Who had a great hole in her stocking;
When the boys cried "Potatoes!"
She uttered three great "Oh's,"
And then called them names that were shocking.

There was a young lady at Kew,
Who would go to sleep in her pew;
When the parson, quite vex'd,
Would not give out the text
Till the clerk stirred her up with a cue.

There was a young lady of Wapping,
Who for joy jumped when taken out shopping;
Till the neighbours would talk,
And they told her to walk,
When she cried, "Well, suppose we try hopping."

There was a young lady of Putney,
Who said that the lamb tasted mut'ny;
And took pickles to bed,
For she oftentimes said
That the Nabobs were better than Chutney.

There was a fair maiden at Node,
Who, when going home, took the wrong road;
When they said she was wrong,
She, in language quite strong,
Said the people might go and be blowed.

There was a young parson at Penge,
Who wore a black tile at Stonehenge;
When they cried, "Who's your hatter?"
He replied, "'Tis no matter,"
When they'd bonnet him out of revenge.

There was an old cabby at Bow,
Whose horse was uncommonly slow;
When his fares they cut rougher,
And called him a duffer,
Not a peg would his old knacker go.

There was a young lady of Jersey,
Who was fat, not to say she was pursy;
When they said, "Pray, try Banting,"
She replied, softly panting,
"I will, till I grow wiccy wersey."

TABLE TALK.

THE *Madras Athenæum* gives the following account of the destruction of a tiger:—"During the last week a notorious man-eating tiger, at a place called Sattiamungalum—which for the last three years has been the terror of the neighbourhood, and is said to have destroyed human beings at the rate of one per week—has happily been destroyed. Captain Caulfield and the Rev. Mr. Jackson, chaplain of the Madras Railway, succeeded in discovering the whereabouts of this brute, and dexterously managed to administer to him a dose of strychnine." An admirable way of getting rid of these fierce beasts, certainly; and one is led to suspect, from information received, that were it not for the interests of le sport, the man-eater would more often succumb to strychnine. We had heard of poisoning noxious beasts, but never before of the dexterous administration plan. As the account is evidently cut down, it is as well to supply the missing portion, which is (probably) as follows: Upon coming up with the brute, Captain Caulfield held out the strychnine, which was carefully concealed in a teaspoonful of black currant jelly; but the tiger drew back his lips, and, displaying his teeth, uttered a growl which said, as plainly as could be, "No, thanks; I have not forgotten the James's powder of my feline infamy." Here he turned to go; but the strychnine had to be administered, so Captain Caulfield seized him by the scruff of his neck, while Mr. Jackson held the spoon. Labour in vain; the brute set his teeth

hard, and refused to open his mouth; till, by a lucky inspiration, Captain Caulfield pinched the end of the animal's long, writhing tail; when, opening his mouth to roar, the spoon was inserted—unfortunately too far, for the savage beast swallowed it, jelly and all. Fortunately it was electro, and of the thinnest quality.

THE FOLLOWING is taken from a pamphlet on "The National Importance of Scientific Research," contrasting the treatment in a pecuniary point of view of our great scientific discoverers with that of other men of eminence:—"That discoverers are not treated by us as we treat other valuable members of the community is quite clear; either a physician, a judge, divine, lawyer, or railway superintendent of high ability obtains from one to many thousand pounds a year, but a discoverer in pure physics or chemistry is in scarcely any case paid anything for his labour. The discoverer Faraday received for his scientific lectures only £200 a year and apartments, during many years, and absolutely nothing for his great discoveries; and during the remainder of his life he only received a few hundred pounds per annum, including a pension of £300 a year from Government. A general of our army receives £2,000, and a field marshal £4,400 a year (see 'Whitaker's Almanack,' 1873, pp. 121 and 138). A head master of either of the great public schools obtains from £3,000 a year upwards. An Archbishop of Canterbury receives £15,000 a year, besides a great amount of influence and power in the form of patronage to 183 livings, a palatial residence, and a seat in the House of Peers. A Bishop of London has £10,000, the patronage of 98 livings, a palace, and a seat in the House of Lords. We leave our readers to judge to what extent these instances illustrate the statement that discoverers are not treated by us as we treat other valuable members of the community."

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C. The Editor will only be responsible for their being safely re-posted to the addresses given.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 298.

September 13, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XXV.

SEEKING A CONNECTION.



BEFORE Rivière could reach the door, Marie was at his side, clinging to his arm and restraining him.

"Don't go," she whispered, her voice trembling with agitation.

"Loose me, Marie. I must stop this. Foolish woman!"

She had thrown her arms round him, and was clinging tightly, so that he had to exercise some force to free himself and hurry down the stairs, hatless, into the

street. It was not reached quickly, though, for the door proved an obstacle. He was strange to it, and the very simple fastening proved an enigma against which he was using unnecessary violence; till a little girl came from one of the lower rooms, touched the latch, and he was at liberty to rush out and across the street, half blind in his fury; but he was too late—no one was standing beneath the lamp.

Rivière looked alternately up and down aghast—he could scarcely believe it; and forgetting the length of time it had occupied him to gain the street, he asked himself whether this was some shadow that he was chasing, and for a few moments he coupled the figure he had seen with the face that had appeared at the cab window. Superstition seized the moment, and like lightning passed through his brain the scene outside the Paris house.

Yes, it must be so: he had killed Le-

maire when he struck him down, and this was— Pshaw! was he a child?

He walked slowly up one side of the street and down the other before slowly returning to his rooms, where he sat down very silent and moody for the rest of the evening.

It is a very easy thing to determine to make an income by getting pupils and teaching them; but somehow the pupils object to be caught. A beginner in London, possibly in all large towns, finds the great obstacle to his progress is that mysterious affair known as connection. He might get on very well, but he has no connection. A teacher, for instance, has pitched his tent in the midst of scores of people wanting to be taught, but he has no connection, and they go elsewhere. Great is the blessing enjoyed by the young man whose ancestors have been kind enough to act as warming pans for him, and kept the place at a pleasant temperature, ready for him to step into and be happy. It is without doubt one of the easiest things in life to be rich and prosperous—to get on if one's father and grandfather have been so self-denying as to do all the dirty work of establishing a connection, and suffer all the stings and disappointments consequent thereon. There are exceptional cases, of course, where a man is fortunate enough to carve his own way upward; but these exceptions are rare; and your prosperous man, as a rule, has gone to work upon a good foundation.

Poor Louis Rivière had no basis upon which to work, and his experience of London soon became this—that your lazy, idle scamp can live, while your hard seeker after bread will often fail, getting so little of the staff of life that he has hard work to keep body and soul together.

A week slipped by, and the fact was more and more impressed upon him that he was not the only refugee in London. He could

not pass from his door without meeting a gaunt-looking compatriot, very shiny of garb, and very much wanting in display of linen. The gentlemen of this cast, though, were mostly independent of aspect, hummed airs from operas, and smoked cigarettes; and more than one went about with a roll of music beneath his arm.

What was he to do to get this connection which he must have?

Marie could give him no advice; so he tried the baker, where he bought his bread by the foot.

This gentleman, who had been a Parisian barricader years before, shrugged his shoulders; and, holding his head on one side, said—

"But yes, it will come."

"But will it come soon?" said Rivière. "We must live. I cannot wait. Will these English seek me to teach?"

"But no," was the reply. "It takes time to get a connection. My wife and I we come over—escape—and I find that we are free, but ready to starve. What to do? I say I cannot sit and eat my fingers. So I think and think, and I say 'Boulangier!'"

"Baker?" said Rivière.

"To be sure, my friend. What better? I could not bake, but I could try; and if we did not sell it, we could eat. It was better than to sit and eat our fingers."

"And you baked?"

"My faith, yes, we baked—Celeste and I. It was not good. My faith, it was bad, that bread; but we did eat it; and it grew better, for we had a new oven, and people came to buy. And now, monsieur, behold!"

The baker held out a loaf of a yard long to Rivière, broke it in half, and displayed its honeycombed texture, and ended by pressing it into his customer's hands.

"Take it, my friend, for the sake of La Belle France," he said. "My friend must try something. We who come here all try, and we help one another when we can; but—what will you?—one cannot take the bit out of one's own mouth to put in another's."

Customer and dealer courteously raised hats, and Rivière marched gravely away with his broken yard of bread, which he deposited before his wife ere going out once more in quest of advice respecting the connection.

His next journey was to the charcutier's, where he left his address upon a piece of

paper—he could not afford a card—with the request that, if the proprietor heard of any opening for a professor (Rivière blushed as he uttered this word)—for a professor to give lessons, would he remember him?

Monsieur the charcutier would—that he would—nothing would give him greater pleasure; but—

"Yes," said Rivière, for the man stopped.

"There are so many hereabout, monsieur, and all trying to teach. It is that if all our compatriots were teaching our dear tongue, not one of these islanders would speak that barbarous English any more."

There was again the saluting, and Rivière went dreamily out into the street, to wander slowly along.

Well, it was one consolation—~~this~~ Soho was very Parisian in its ways. He could meet pale Frenchwomen in their ~~bonne~~-like caps. Here was an ~~estaminet~~, there a ~~café~~, and the familiar rattle of the ~~dominoes~~ upon the little marble tables. Dinner at price fixed announced here, table ~~d'hôte~~ over the way, and farther on an open window, the sound of singing, a hot puff of air, and the thumping of irons: the blanchisseuse busily at work. A billiard table, too, and the familiar click of balls. Yes, this was very French, this place: he could not have done better. But how to live?

Now he stopped to listen to the running arpeggios performed by a violinist, and longed for his own instrument. For why? That he might give lessons. But how? The connection?

It was a dreary problem to solve, but he set himself to do it; and, after trying for two or three days, and making endless inquiries, he came to the conclusion that his wisest plan was to advertise.

One thing, however, troubled him greatly. In a weak moment, when his wife, with many a blandishment, had begged of him to give up all intention of going to the Law-~~lers~~, he had half promised that he would go there no more—laughed at her again and again for a weak, silly child, and kissed her as he told her that he had never felt his fancy stray from her for a moment.

That was a trouble to him, for he felt that he could not tell Marie if he determined to fulfil his original intentions, and went to give the lessons. And yet it would be deceiving her. But it was for her good. They could not starve. Bah! he was no sentimental Parisian, that he could close up the

doors and windows of his room, and take the long sleep, lulled to death by a pot of charcoal.

But he would wait a week.

He waited. Their last few shillings were nearly gone. Not an answer had come to any one of his advertisements; and though he had made inquiries, and prosecuted his search as far as was possible, still nothing; and he looked with dismay at the faint, despairing smile with which Marie always met him upon his return.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A FRENCH LESSON.

IT was no mere figure of speech: starvation was literally staring the Rivières in the face. People, as a rule, doubt it, but starvation, in all its skeleton nakedness, comes to a good many every year in London. By selling at a beggarly price dresses that had been given by Lady Lawler to Marie, they had lived for three weeks, and paid their landlady—who, though suspicious, had no idea that their means were so narrow.

One cause of uneasiness, however, had not troubled Rivière—he had seen no more of Lemaire; and, occupied as his mind was with present troubles and the means of staying off the difficulties of the day, he had not seen that whenever he went out he was followed—perhaps because it was by different people, sometimes by a man, at others by a woman, who carried out their plans with such care that they did not for a moment raise his suspicions.

Rivière had staved off the trouble day after day, till he could hold out no longer; and he felt that he must lean upon the Lawlers for help. He told himself that it was his last chance; and, conscious in his own mind of his fidelity to his wife, and looking upon Lady Lawler's behaviour in its true light—a love of incense and attention—he determined to call, give his lessons, and, so as to spare poor Marie discomfort, keep from her the knowledge of where he had been.

It was a weak resolve—weaker than the half-promise he had made; but he thought that he was working for the best, and could not foresee the evil that would follow—the despair and anguish that so simple a departure from the path of rectitude would entail.

To determine was, with a man of his

restless disposition, to act; and, after making some excuse, he started off in good time one morning for Grosvenor-square.

It is no great distance from that square of Soho; but Louis Rivière was weak. His breakfast that morning had been the same as his dinner the previous day—bread, bought with the proceeds of a pledged garment; and he had fasted that Marie, who was delicate, might have something to tempt her appetite.

He was weak, indeed; and yet he walked twice round the great square before he could summon courage to go up to the door. Poverty was making a coward of him; and it was long since he had felt that sense of calm independence given by the possession of coin, enough and to spare.

At last he ascended the broad flight of steps, and paused. "Visitors"—"Servants"—the knocker: which should he attack?

He felt lower than the servants, for he knew that he was a beggar; and he hesitated for some minutes before, in despair, he gave a good pull at the visitors' bell, to stand shivering the next moment, and nervous, as if he had committed some crime.

Rivière had done wisely, though; for his bold summons brought James up in haste, and the recollection of the gratuity made him rather less supercilious than might have been expected.

Was her ladyship in?

Well, James did not quite know; but he would go and see.

James yawned very loudly as he left the little Frenchman in the hall, and took himself slowly up the grand staircase, to return at the end of five minutes with the request that "Mounseer Rivvyer" would step upstairs.

"You know the room, I think?" said James, with a calm majesty of deportment.

"Yes, thank you," was the reply. And Rivière ran up hastily, wondering what his reception would be like. On the landing, though, he paused for a few moments, for his thoughts suddenly went back to Marie.

Was he being true to her? Was not this breaking faith? He hesitated, and was disposed to turn back, till the recollection of their abject poverty spurred him on; and the next moment he had turned the handle and entered.

"Oh, Monsieur Rivière, where have you been?" was the first thing he heard; and then he found himself clasping the hand

of Lady Lawler, who was looking radiant, and smiling in his face.

"Miladi must excuse me," he said, "I have been much pressed."

Lady Lawler pouted.

"I ought to be pleased," she said. "And so you are very busy, with plenty of pupils?"

"My faith, no!" said Rivière, with a shrug and a shake of the head—"miladi is my only scholar."

"But that is dreadful," said Lady Lawler. "Never mind, though—Richard shall get you a dozen next week. Now, what shall we read?"

Molière was fixed upon, and they took their seats at a table to begin; but they had only read about a dozen words before Lady Lawler had to ask some question respecting Madame Rivière's health.

Then they recommenced, and the pupil read slowly, and not with a perfect accent, another line.

"You do not look so well as you did when you were here, Monsieur Rivière. You have not taken exercise enough."

"But, miladi, I have been constantly in the streets."

"Then it is too much. I thought there was something."

Rivière smiled feebly, and drew her attention once more to the French.

Lady Lawler gave an impatient shrug of her shoulders, and read on very badly half a page of the little book, half resenting the corrections from time to time suggested; and more than once there was a knitting of the brows, and sundry other tokens of impatience.

It was so very matter-of-fact, this learning French; and Monsieur Rivière was so staid and polite. He thought of nothing but the lesson; and it had been taken up, to a great extent, as a pastime.

"Dear me, Monsieur Rivière, this is very tiresome!" she exclaimed at last, with a suppressed yawn.

"Miladi is tired. Shall we rest for a while?"

"Oh, no—oh, yes—I don't want it to be too much like the old governess days. Talk to me in French, Monsieur Rivière, and let me try to answer."

"Try!" said Rivière, with an effort to nerve himself to offer the incense he knew was asked—"Miladi speaks French exceedingly well."

"Ah, méchant!" she exclaimed, smiling, "now you are flattering."

And it was evident the change suited her mood. She was a very handsome woman, and she knew it; but none the less it was satisfactory to be told so, and also that she was clever. So, in a light fashion, the conversation went on in bad French for awhile, Rivière exerting himself to the best of his ability to say the honeyed nothings suitable to the occasion, all of which sweetstuff her ladyship accepted, willingly paying for it in smiles, without for a moment guessing at the bitterness in her visitor's heart.

"Now we'll read a little more, Monsieur Rivière," said the lady at last; "for I really cannot sit and listen to any more of your French compliments. But will you oblige me by ringing the bell."

Rivière rose, and staggered slightly as he crossed the room to fulfil the mission; but he fought against the weakness, and it was not perceived, though his hostess remarked the pallor of his face as he returned to his chair.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked.

"Oh, no, no—my faith, no," was the reply, accompanied by a ghastly smile—"it is nothing."

"The sherry and biscuits, James," said Lady Lawler to the servant. Then, turning to Rivière, she continued—"Twice a week, Monsieur Rivière, you know—Tuesdays and Fridays, without fail; and I really will work hard, and you shall be very proud of your pupil."

"But I am always that," said Rivière, with an effort to smile. "Who could exist in the presence of so much beauty—"

Rivière's speech was cut short by the stately stride of James, who entered bearing the wine and biscuits, which he placed by his lady's side, and left the room.

"Yes," said Lady Lawler, "you will come without fail twice a week. That is," she added, with a little grimace, "if you do not get tired of me and my tiresome blunders."

"My dear Lady Lawler," exclaimed Rivière, holding out one hand for the sherry she had poured for him, "I—"

He was ghastly pale. Had the wine been offered a minute sooner, it would have saved him; but now his hand dropped to his side, he half started up, and then sank back in his chair, with a cold dew upon his pale face, murmuring—

"Air—air—air!"

Poor fellow, he had had too much air of late; and, though reviving, it is wanting in nutriment.

"Oh, good heavens!" exclaimed Lady Lawler, starting to his side. "Monsieur Rivière, are you ill? What is the matter?"

A faint sigh was the only reply, and the dull eyes that gazed at her looked helpless and imploring.

"Oh, if a doctor were only here," she exclaimed, "he would tell me what it is."

He would have told her it was the first stage of starvation; but as he was not there to tell it, Lady Lawler knew it not, but ran across the room to drag at the bell, altered her mind, and did not ring it.

"The servants are so stupid," she exclaimed, helplessly—"they would only stand and stare."

She ran back to Rivière's side, tripping over her long dress three times in the short transit.

"Oh, poor man, what can I do for him?" she exclaimed, clasping her hands. "Monsieur Rivière, Monsieur Rivière! Oh, my dear Monsieur Rivière," she exclaimed, pitifully, "pray don't die!"

She ran to the bell again, but once more changed her mind, and went and this time did a wise thing—opened the window. Then she ran back to his side, and took his hands, one after the other, to find them clammy and cold. Next, she tried to feel the pulse in the thin, white wrist; as if under the idea that the pressure of a finger there acted upon some peculiar spring in the human form, and would set the machine going again.

Failing to see any effect from pressing her fingers upon the right wrist, Lady Lawler tried the left; then let it fall in despair, and began to cry bitterly; for now Rivière lay back with half-closed eyes, perfectly motionless.

"What shall I do?" exclaimed Lady Lawler, at last waking to the fact that she must take action in some way.

Again she ran to the bell, but hesitated to pull.

"The servants would talk so," she thought, as she ran back.

"No water, of course," she said, pettishly; but catching sight of a flower vase, she snatched the flowers from it, threw them upon the table, and poured some of the water into her hand, but only to throw it

from her with an exclamation indicative of disgust, for the water had not been changed for two or three days.

Just then her eye caught the decanter and the wine glass, which she caught up and held to Rivière's lips; but without effect. So, failing water, she sprinkled his face with the sherry, and then dipped her fingers in it and applied it to his temples; ending by wetting her handkerchief and bathing his face, with the effect of producing a faint sigh.

Encouraged by this, she took the decanter, soaked her handkerchief once more, and bathed his face and temples liberally.

Another sigh encouraged her; and now it struck her that the wisest thing would be to try and get him to swallow a few drops.

Flushed and excited, Lady Lawler filled the glass; and was too much occupied to hear the loud ringing which now came at a bell, though it did not sound very clearly in the softly furnished, close-doored drawing-room.

"Now," she said, kneeling down at Rivière's side, and holding the glass to his lips—"now, try and drink a little of this."

Poor Rivière, who smelt very strongly of sherry, sighed again, and was fast recovering consciousness; though he was still in that confused, dreamy state which succeeds a fainting fit, when the sufferer is more conscious of a singing in the ears and a feeling of hideous sickness than of anything else. He heard the words addressed to him, but they had hardly any meaning; though by degrees he became aware of the fact that an arm was passed beneath his head, half raising it from the back of the lounge in which he had been seated, and that he was being asked to drink something—all of which mingled with his sensations to make him think he had been very ill, and that his nurse was about to give him his physic.

"Pray drink some of this," said the voice at his ear, more earnestly; and he essayed to swallow a mouthful, but only for the room to seem to swim round before his eyes once more; and with another sigh of weakness, his head sank upon Lady Lawler's shoulder as she knelt by his side, and he became unconscious of the fact that the drawing-room door suddenly opened, that Lady Lawler uttered an exclamation, and that another exclamation of a decidedly masculine and forcible character was uttered by Sir Richard as he strode into the room.

A POET, BEDAD!

WANTED, a poet. Must be of Irish birth—merry, light-hearted, ready to laugh with gladness, or to shed a tear of sympathy. Salary: fame, paid quarterly.—Apply to the British Public. It is time we had a successor to Lover and Lever, for our poet should be able to prose pleasantly. Our advertisement has been worded, it has never been published until now; but, to be thoroughly Irish, here is a candidate for the post before he has been asked for, in the shape of Mr. Alfred Perceval Graves, who comes forward very modestly with his rhymes, and offers them, like a set of examination papers, for a testimonial in his favour. "Songs of Killarney"* sounds well, and promises well to the reader, who naturally looks for lines smacking of lakes and mountains—of pretty, bare-legged, shawl-snooded girls, bog and heather, the pipes, the fiddle, and the "pratees." And he is not disappointed, for the little shamrock-coloured book contains a fair sprinkle of merry, sparkling verses, far removed from the tame, regular displays of poems of young writers, whose rhymes are one and all found to be "after" some one or another.

One Shiel Dhuv, a fiddler, tunes the string in several of Mr. Graves's songs, which commence with "The Rose of Killarney;" and here she is, as seen through the eyes of friend Shiel—

"I've been soft in a small way
On the girleens of Galway,
And the Limerick lasses have made me feel quare;
But there's no use denyin'
No girl I've set eye on
Wid the Rose of Killarney at all could compare.

Her hair mocks the sunshine,
And the soft silver moonshine
Neck and arm of the colleen completely eclipse,
Whilst the nose of the jewel
Slants straight as Carn Tual;
From the heaven in her eye to her heather-sweet lips.

If y' inquire why the nightingale
Still shuns the invitin' gale,
That wafts every song-bird but her to the West;
Faix she knows, I suppose,
Ould Killarney's a Rose
That would sing any Bulbul to sleep in her nest.

When her voice gives the warnin'
For the milkin' in the mornin',
Ev'n the cow known for hornin' comes runnin' to
her pail;
The lambs play about her
And the small bonneens snout her,
Whilst their parints salute her wid a twist of the tail.

* London: Bradbury, Agnew, and Co., 1873.

O, where
Can her like be found?
Nowhere
The country round.
Spins at her wheel
Daughter as true,
Sets in the reel
Wid a slide of the shoe,
a slinderer,
tinderer,
purtier,
wittier colleen, than you
Rose, aroo!"

One is in doubt about the "bonneens," but I suppose they are calves. But "Rose, aroo" has a rival in the next poem in one Nora Maguire, "The Girl with the Cows," a metrical tale of some length, and certainly one of the best in the book. Her history, too, is related by Shiel Dhuv:—

"Is it tired, toe and heel,
Of planxty and reel?
And your sweethearts are cross to you—boys, is it so?
Then make way in the middle
For me and the fiddle,
And I'll tell you the tale of the Colleen na Mo."

Nora, it seems, was the flower of the girls—

"Wid her laughin' blue eye and her sunny bright
curls,
Wid her mouth's merry dimple, her head's purty
poise,
And a foot that played puck right and left wid the
boys."

She is an heiress, too; for her father has left her half a hundred cows. She is good, and possessed of "lashins of sense," and loves Patrick O'Neale. Patrick is the son of Widow O'Neale, who had once

"For a twelvemonth been novice, and lived wid
the nuns,
Though when that was out—I've no time for the
tale—
She took Patrick's father instead of the veil."

And, after sewing herself nearly blind in her widowhood to pay for his schooling, Patrick grows up to earn man's wages, and in digging potatoes—

"Foot to foot down the ridge wid O'Faherty
pressed,
Who of all pratee diggers was counted the best."

Pat goes to help teach at the night school:—

"And yourselves would be pleased to have heard
him at night,
In the master's new school-house, so smart and
polite,
Explainin' the earth's longitudinal plan
To a wild-headed stump of a mountainy man."

But, to make a long story short, there's love, and of course jealousy and bashfulness. Patrick sees his love in everything, and this is very prettily told:—

"And as he went clippin' the briar wid his bill,
Or rowed up the river, or reaped on the hill,
Some fancy of Nora would come to him still.
The arbutus fruit now, or a stretch of the sky,
Would recall her red lip or her laughin' blue eye;
The heath flower to-day of her blushes would hint,
And to-morrow the furze took her tresses' own tint.
The spring leaped with her laugh over pebbles of pearl,
And the sailing swan signed him his white-bosomed girl.
While 'Nora' for ever his oar on the bay,
And 'Nora' his spade in the garden used say,
And 'Nora,' still 'Nora,' to the tunes she loved best,
His heart it kept beating the time in his breast."

Now we come into the regions of romance. Patrick gets in a mist on the mountain-side, and is hurrying homeward, when he hears from above—

"The voice of the girl that had stolen his love:
'*Magrina, magrina, magrinashin oge,*
Come hither, my Laidir, come Kitty, you rogue,
Come up, Blackbird, come Snow, to the beautiful house.'
'Tis the Colleen na Mo,' he said, 'callin' her cows."

But her voice sounded sadly and strange in his ear,
And the heart of O'Neale began knockin' for fear;
And he looked and he saw risin' up from below,
The Shadow of the Shape of the Colleen na Mo
Growin' greater for ever, till a monster of black,
Like the Spirit of Death, it stood out of the track;
And O'Neale knew the warnin'—and shouted '*Stand back,*
Stand back for your life!' but the shadow went still,
Wid its arms wavin' wild on the brow of the hill.
Then it trembled, and balanced, and staggered, and fell,
Down, down wid the moan of a muffled death-bell."

Poor Nora has fallen over a precipice, and her rescue is told most graphically—Patrick being let down by a hay rope.

"So a torch in his hand and a stick in his teeth,
And his coat round his throat, the boys lowered him beneath.
And all but Murt Shea, then, they couldn't make out
The coat round his throat, and the stick in his mou't."

But it wasn't for long they'd the doubt in their mind,
For they saw his torch quenched wid a noise like the wind,
And 'Steady above!' came his voice from below.
Then heavy wings flapped wid a scream and a blow.
'Tis the eagles, they cried, 'at the Colleen na Mo!'
But an old man amongst them spoke up, and he said—
'Tis the eagles for sartin, but not at the dead,

For they'll not touch the corpse—murther, but for the mist,
'Tis I could have told you that this was their nest.
It's O'Neale that they're at—pull him back or they'll tear
The poor boy to pieces below in the air.'
And they shouted together the eagles to scare,
And they called to O'Neale from the edge of the height,
'She's dead, Pat, she's dead, never mind her to-night.
But come back, or the eagles'll pick out your sight,'
And they made for to pull; but he cried, 'If you do,
I give you my oath that I'll cut the rope through.'
And they b'lieved him, and waited wid hearts beatin' loud,
Screechin' down at the birds through the vapoury cloud,
Showerin' splinters for ever to give the boy light,
And warnin' him watch to the left or the right,
As each eagle in turn it would fly at his head;
Till he dropped one below in the darkness for dead,
And the other flew off wid a yell through the night.
Then they felt the rope slacken as he crossed to the bough,
Then tighten again, and he called to them, 'Now!'
And they knew that the dangerous moment was come.
So wid wrist draggin' shoulder, tight finger to thumb,
And tooth crushing tooth in the silence of death,
They drew up the two from the blackness beneath."

Of course they were married, and this was the wedding day:—

"There'd been a long stretch of delightful spring weather,
But this was the day beat the rest altogether.
Over mountain and valley and river—Oyeh!
There was never for ever so darlin' a day—
Wid its purty pale primroses shrinkin' so shy
From the bachelor butterfly's kiss and go-by,
And wid hawthorns like bridesmaids come out in the air,
Arrangin' white wreaths in their iligant hair."

So much for "The Girl with the Cows," which is throughout mirthful, sparkling, and full of local colouring; and, indeed, is a poem that could have been written by no one but a man who had lived amongst the people whose habits are so graphically described.

"Fixing the Day" is a merry little dialogue; and another song worth attention, as sung by our bard's lyre—which proves again to be played with a bow—is "O'Farrell the Fiddler." And so it is too in "The Potatoe Blossom," a thoroughly national subject for a song, surely never before tried. Shiel Dhuv is supposed to be the singer here again:—

"As fiddle in hand
I crossed the land,

Wid homesick heart so weighty,
 I chanced to meet
 A girl so sweet,
 That she turned my grief to gai'ty.
 Now what cause for pause
 Had her purty feet?
 Faix, the beautiful flower of the pratee.,
 Thin more power to the flower of the pratee,
 The beautiful flower of the pratee,
 For fixin' the feet
 Of that colleen sweet
 On the road to Cincinnati.

You'd imagine her eye
 Was a bit of blue sky,
 And her cheek had a darlin' dimple.
 Her footstep faltered;
 She blushed, and altered
 Her shawl wid a timid trimble.
 'And oh, sir, what's the blossom
 You wear on your bosom?'
 She asked most sweet and simple.

I looked in her face
 To see could I trace
 Any hint of lurkin' levity;
 But there wasn't a line
 Of her features fine
 But expressed the gentlest gravity.
 So quite at my aise
 At her innocent ways,
 Wid sorra a sigh of brevity,

Says I, 'Don't you know
 Where these blossoms blows
 And their name of fame, mavourneen?
 I'd be believin'
 You were deceivin'
 Shiel Dhuv this summer mornin',
 If your eyes didn't shine
 So frank on mine,
 Such a schemin' amusement scornin'.'

The lady is evidently not "deceivin'," so
 he tunes up and sings her

THE SONG OF THE PRATEE.

"When after the Winter alarmin',
 The Spring steps in so charmin',
 So fresh and arch
 In the middle of March
 Wid her hand St. Patrick's arm in.
 Let us all, let us all be goin',
 Agra, to assist at your sowin',
 The girls to spread
 Your iligant bed,
 And the boys to set the hoe in.

* * * * *
 So rest and sleep, my jewel,
 Safe from the tempest cruel,
 Till violets spring
 And skylarks sing
 From Mourne to Carn Tual.
 Then awake and build your bower
 Through April sun and shower,
 To bless the earth
 That gave you birth,
 Through many a sultry hour.

* * * * *
 Thus smile with glad increasin',
 Till to St. John we're raisin'

Through Erin's Isle
 The pleasant pile
 That sets the bonfire blazin'.
 O, 'tis then that the Midsummer fairy,
 Abroad on his sly vagary,
 Wid purple and white,
 As he passes by night,
 Your emerald leaf shall vary.

* * * * *
 And once again, mavourneen,
 Some mellow Autumn mornin',
 At red sunrise
 Both girls and boys
 To your garden ridge we're turnin'.
 Then under your foliage fadin',
 Each man of us sets his spade in,
 While the colleen bawn
 Her brown kishane
 Full up wid your fruit is ladin'."

And so on, till the lady declares, "I'll
 never forget this flower's the Potato Blossom."

"The Invention of Wine" we do not
 care for, and it seems out of place here. It
 would have sounded far more in keeping if
 Mr. Graves had sketched a bog-still, and the
 wreathing vapours round the invention of
 the craythur; but he makes up for his lapse
 in "The Spinning Wheel," and "The Fairy
 Pig." And, with one exception, it is here
 that Mr. Graves should have ended his
 volume; for it is not quantity we look for in
 a song so much as quality. A writer is often
 known by one short poem of half a dozen
 stanzas, which float round the world wher-
 ever the Anglo-Saxon tongue is spoken. If,
 then, Mr. Graves had left out the latter
 half of his verses, for our part we should
 have been not only content, but far better
 satisfied. Not that we wish to depreciate
 his "Spring Voices," or his "Moods and
 Melodies," for they are above the average
 of first volumes of poems. But this is very
 little to say. In these busy days, sonnets
 and lines to anybody find very little favour;
 and they have evidently crept in here from
 the author's dread lest he should not be
 giving the public enough for their money.
 Of course tastes vary; and while ours go
 with his brisk, bright, merry Irishisms, there
 are those of more sedate feeling who
 would prefer "Sad Silence," or the "Lines
 to an Artist." By all means, then, let each
 have that which seems to him good, and
 pray Mr. Graves to make, in future editions,
 his one volume two. Ours shall be the first
 half, though; and we should advise him to
 print one hundred of our edition to a single
 copy of the second—that being the propor-

tion in which we think the works will sell; for your poem pure and simple, unless it bear the Tennysonian hall-mark, is liable to grow mouldy on the publisher's shelf. It is a sad thing, but a true one, that nearly everybody who takes pen in hand first for an attempt at literary composition aims at rhyme, and produces lines that jingle together in their endings; after which he or she copies them out as if they were of great value, and sends them to some editor, with a request that they may be used "to fill up a corner in his valuable periodical." It is very sad, but it is none the less a fact, that with respect to nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of these poems, they would not be used unless it were really for business reasons to fill up a corner.

But this by the way. We are not slandering the latter half of Mr. Graves's book, only dwelling on the thoughts that verses of the kind suggest. We said that the book should be divided into two; but we made an exception, and that is in favour of the "Irish Lullaby," which should go with the former half, for its genuine, quaint, national character. One can read the poems on either side, and forget them directly; but this seems to ask to be re-read, and is dwelt on again and again. The song seems to bear with it its own wild, crooning melody; and its ruggedness and barbarisms render it the more welcome. We do not say that our judgment is correct; but all the same declare the "Lullaby" to be a gem. Let the reader read. Set the book aside, and read it again if he find it not as we say. The bouquet of good wine grows upon the palate:—

"I'd rock my own sweet childie to rest in a cradle
of gold on a bough of the willow,
To the *shosheen* ho of the wind of the west and
the *shularoo* of the soft sea billow,
Sleep, baby dear,
Sleep without fear,
Mother is here beside your pillow.

I'd put my own sweet childie to sleep in a silver
boat on the beautiful river,
Where a *shosheen* whisper the white cascades, and
a *shularoo* the green flags shiver.
Sleep, baby dear,
Sleep without fear,
Mother is here with you for ever.

Shularoo! to the rise and fall of mother's bosom
'tis sleep has bound you,
And O, my child, what cozier nest for rosier rest
could love have found you?
Sleep, baby dear,
Sleep without fear,
Mother's two arms are clasped around you."

Altogether, we congratulate Mr. Graves upon his work, which is really a novelty, and should be in every library; but whether he will take Lover's place remains to be seen. Setting aside laurels, the shamrock wreath is one worthy of wear; but, in the name of all that's pleasant, let us beg him to abjure the sonnet, and cease to write lines to anybody, save when called upon to contribute to the album of a maiden fair; though nowadays album owners are scarce, saving those who set aside the falsity of verse for the photographic truth of Apollo—lyrical no longer, but in his character of the sun.

HALF AN HOUR WITH A LANCASHIRE CHEAP TRIP.

"HOW many people did you say?"
"Fifteen thousand seven hundred to-day, and twenty-five thousand to-morrow."

It was the Thursday in Whit week, and these figures represented the number of excursionists by an immense cheap trip from the grim Lancashire cities, who were even now invading our pleasant seaside town. An invasion it literally was. The great unwashed came streaming up the road from the station in shoals and crowds. Now, a Lancashire crowd is, above all others, suggestive of the peculiar presence of oil, and the particular absence of soap; likewise for an utter disregard of conventionalities. It is given to pushing us unceremoniously out of its way, to ousting us disrespectfully from our special seats, to jostling us familiarly with its elbows, to choosing our own particular sailing boat for its own accommodation, to treading on our toes with its clogs, to choking us with the grimy dust that accompanies its march, to raising a very Babel of strong and shrill voices which disturb our meditations. It is given to donkey rides, and gingerbread, and other abominations. It is self-assertive and very fluffy. It rubs us up the wrong way, and makes itself generally objectionable.

Regarding cheap trips in the light of a nuisance of the first magnitude, no wonder the advent of fifteen thousand and odd dusty, oily people, with the prospect of twenty-five thousand more, was not regarded with feelings of unmixed satisfaction. This special one seemed aggravatingly bent on making its presence felt. The eager, noisy crowd came pouring on, not in the easy, lazy manner in which one

would naturally suppose hard-working mill hands would enjoy their day out; but bustling, pushing, hurrying, keenly anxious to get as much pleasure crowded into the one day, and working as energetically for it, as any bees in a hive. They came surging on to the promenade, and speedily besieged the entrance to the pier, driving the ticket collector to his wits' end with their clamorous appeals. A noisy crowd invaded every bench and form. Another streamed tumultuously down the steps to the sands. A fourth spread into the streets; and a much smaller one wandered aimlessly up and down the promenade.

We stood for a minute or two at the gates of the pier, amused with the importunate demands of the noisy crew, and the struggles of the gatekeeper to satisfy fifty demands for tickets at once.

"Give us seven tram tickets," shouted a burly blacksmith, head and shoulders above the rest of the throng. "Look sharp, mon, me an' my missus an' th' little uns wants to get to the watter."

Stretching out a long arm over the heads of the people before him, and regardless of their prior claims to attention, he put sevenpence down on the counter.

"It's one and sixpence, if you want to go down by the tramway," said the man;—"the pier a penny each, tram threepence, children half-price."

"D'ye think a'm a fule, mon?" asked the blacksmith, sarcastically.

"It's the regular charge," said the man of tickets.

"It's a regular swindle," retorted the blacksmith. "D'ye mean to tell me as ye charges thruppence each for a-totting of us to th' watter an' back?"

"Yes—that's the charge for the cars."

"An' a penny for th' pier besides?"

"Yes."

"Lord's sake, what knaves and fules there must be i' Southport! Here, gie us th' coppers—we'll none go at that price. Coom along, missus; the watter 'll be oop to us soon, 'thout paying for at all."

Gathering up his coppers, and dragging his wife and children out of the crowd, the indignant blacksmith strode away—a "little un" on each side of him, his "missus" bringing up the rear with the baby.

Not a little diverted by the blacksmith's indignation, we strolled along the promenade after the party, keeping them well in

view, till a bride and bridegroom, evidently out for their honeymoon, attracted our attention. The gentleman, attired in the blackest and most funereal of garments, the glossiest and newest of hats, and the liveliest of neckties, walked a few steps in advance of his companion. He seemed very unhappy—whether with the unwonted gorgeousness of his apparel, which he evidently considered quite the thing, or the sense of his new responsibilities, did not appear. As he walked stolidly along, looking at nothing in particular, he might have been taken for a mute at a funeral, so melancholy and woebegone was his appearance. With the pretty girl behind him, apparently he had not the slightest connection; but then it is not according to Lancashire etiquette for a husband and wife to walk side by side. He might have a very tender spot in his heart for his one day's bride, but he would have scorned to show it. The lady appeared to acquiesce very quietly in this affectionate arrangement. She was wonderfully splendid in colours. Her dress of the inevitable purple stuff—the girls of the mills pin their faith on purple stuff for a wedding, as the men do on black clothes;—her shawl of the most gorgeous tartan; her bonnet of white, the latest fashion, and crowned with a wreath of orange blossoms. It was tilted far back on her head, showing a pretty, fresh face, and a pair of glittering earrings, set with immense green stones. Very well satisfied she seemed with her festive finery; it was irreproachable in her eyes, and as much to be admired as that of any lady in the land.

They stopped close to us. Evidently the responsibility of amusing his bride rested on the man's mind; for he gave a tremendous yawn, and said, in a melancholy voice—

"What'll us do, Sairey?"

"I dunno. Let's have a go in the 'Flying Dutchman.'"

It must be explained that the "Flying Dutchman" is a boat on wheels, provided with large sails. These sails being spread to the wind, like those of a ship, the whole machine skims along the hard, dry sands with incredible velocity.

The bridegroom lifted his hat, and scratched his head in perplexity. The "Flying Dutchman" was decidedly not quite to his taste.

"Oo flies along so," said he, doubtfully. "Aw don't loike th' looks on him."

"Why, oo's nobbut a boat on wheels,"

responded the more adventurous better-half.
 "Thee's not scared wi' that, surely?"

"Aw don't loike him, aw tell thee, Sairey; an' a'll have nothing to say to him."

"Let's have a donkey ride, then," suggested Sairey.

"Thee'll tumble off, sure enuf, an' break thee neck," said the melancholy husband.

"No, no, 'a won't—a'll stick fast to th' donkey's ears," laughed the wife back again.

"Coom an' 'ave some grub," suggested the bridegroom, as if a brilliant way of escape from Sairey's adventurous proposals had suddenly struck him.

"'A don't moind if 'a do," responded the bride, briskly.

The happy pair descended the steps to the sands, towards a large stall spread with cakes and gingerbread, whose owner was driving a brisk trade in these delicacies. For a while they were lost in the crowd around the stall, no doubt enjoying the "grub." Presently they came into view again, walking towards the donkeys. We suppose Sairey had gained her point, for after a short parley with the donkey driver the two mounted; and the last we saw of the loving couple, the bride was trotting merrily away on her donkey, looking back to laugh at her husband, whose gallant steed stuck obstinately under one of the arches of the pier, refusing to move at any price, while the melancholy man was belabouring it unmercifully with his new, glossy hat, as the only available weapon within reach.

"Stop here, mother—we can rest here and watch the sea."

It was a fretful, feverish voice which spoke. A sort of rough chair, fastened on wheels, had drawn close up to us. On it a young girl was lying, her cheeks flushed, her eyes bright with consumption, a short, unceasing cough, and restless white hands. The mother was a neat-looking woman, with a composed, self-reliant face. The hands that wheeled the chair were soft and supple—sure signs of a worker in a mill.

"Is your daughter very ill?" asked a young lady, sitting close by.

"Yes; she is dying of consumption," said the woman, quietly.

She did not lower her voice so that the girl might not hear; and the matter-of-fact, unemotional tones sounded very strange. In going among mill operatives, nothing seems so curious as the cool way in which they

will discuss an inevitable death. What is generally spoken of among us with bated breath and solemn thoughts, is by them spoken of freely and openly, like any everyday event. It is no want of affection or feeling; but an utter absence of reticence on a subject which to us would seem too sacred to be lightly mentioned. This woman, though evidently loving and careful for her daughter, knew that she must die. The poor girl herself knew it. It was a fact, and they simply stated it, as they would have done any other undeniable truth.

"Is she well enough to be out in the open air?" asked the lady.

"I don't know; but she was just pining and wearying for a breath of the fresh wind. We lives in Abbot's-court, out of Friargate, in Preston; an' it is but close there. I heard of the trip, and a neighbour lent us the chair to carry her, for she cannot walk, so I just brought her."

"Will the sea be up soon? It's a long way off, an' I want to feel the salt feel of the air," said the girl, her lustrous, craving eyes looking eagerly across the large bare expanse of sand, over which the tide was so slowly spreading, towards the blue line far away.

"It will be quite up here at one o'clock," said the young lady; "but you could go down the pier now, and quite at the end there are sheltered houses in the sun. There you would be really above the sea, all day long if you liked."

"Can we go, mother? Oh, let us go! I'm wearying for a breath of the fresh air. It is so hot here," pleaded the poor girl.

The mother hesitated. Perhaps her purse was so short that even the small toll at the pier was too much for it. She glanced at the gay flag fluttering over the convenient summer houses at the end, then at her child's wistful, longing face, and looked irresolute. The young lady rose, and going to the girl, dropped some money into her hand.

"You must let me give you a little pleasure," said she, kindly.

The woman drew herself up stiffly.

"We are not beggars, miss."

"I know," was the gentle reply; "but won't you let me give a little pleasure to your daughter? No doubt you left home early, it is a long way to the end of the pier, and you will want something to eat if you stay as long as she would like. There is a

good refreshment-room there. You will not refuse me, I am sure."

The woman still hesitated; but another glance at her daughter's poor eager face overcame her pride. Her thanks were not very cordial; but one could not help respecting the sturdy, honest nature that made it so hard to receive what she considered as charity. We never saw the girl or her mother again; the sweet-faced young lady was a stranger; but at least one sad, weary lot was brightened, one poor heart cheered that day, by a kindly deed kindly done.

We were still watching their progress down the pier, when our first friends, the blacksmith and his family, again came wandering leisurely along.

There are four blind men, who have their regular stations about ten yards apart from each other in the most crowded part of the promenade. Before each of these the whole family stopped in contemplation for full five minutes. The first blind man is a good-looking fellow, always carefully dressed in clean linen artizan's suit. He carries a box of needles, pins, &c., and has not a few customers, though he seems principally to rely upon his intelligent face and prepossessing appearance. The ugly blind man stands next; and, ugliness notwithstanding, flourishes even better than his handsome neighbour. He stands in a lackadaisical attitude, and repeats, in a mournful voice, the one sentence, "I am blind, I am blind."

This monotonous repetition excites people's sympathies wonderfully. The third blind man sits on a camp stool, with a Bible on his knee, reading aloud—of course following the words with his fingers. The fourth blind man plays the harmonium. He affects melancholy airs: the Old Hundred Psalm being his favourite, it occurs at the beginning, middle, and end of every performance, an enthusiastic chorus of admirers chiming in vigorously, if not very melodiously. Before this last, the blacksmith lingered a long time; but at last he turned and took a survey of the sands below. Presently he led the way down the flight of steps, followed closely by his "missus and th' little uns"—the "little uns" comprehending a tall girl, the inevitable baby, and three mischievous, roguish lads. At the bottom they were very naturally assailed by the whole troop of donkey girls. Such a prize did not often come in their way, and

they swooped down upon their victims with a rush.

"Take my donkey, sir—he's a stunner to go," cried number one, a tall, sunburnt damsel, bringing forward a very meek-looking steed.

"Take mine, ma'am—safe as a cheer he is," vociferated number two.

"Mine's a cradle, sir. Rock the baby to sleep, sir. Try him," suggested number three, a small girl, with a particularly wicked-looking donkey.

"Shure, an' 'ere's the beauties for ye, ladies and gentlemen," shouted an Irish girl, insinuatingly, pulling a donkey forward on each arm. "Aisy as swings and safe as feather beds; goes on four legs, they does, like Christians."

But number five settled the question summarily. Seizing the poor baby, she plumped him down suddenly on her donkey, before the bewildered mother could utter a word.

"There!" said she, appealing to her, admiringly. "Aint he a king, to be sure? You've never the heart to take him off again."

The chorus of voices rose high and shrill round the devoted family. The burly, good-humoured father looked helplessly this way and that. At last his wife came to the rescue.

"We don't want donkeys—we want a carriage," said she.

In a minute the astonished baby was restored to his mother's arms, and the noisy troop retreated, with a parting shot from the Irish girl—

"Shure, an' ye'd better draw ye're ain carriage yerself, sir. Two-legged donkeys 'll do for the loikes o' ye."

Heedless of this sarcasm, the whole family proceeded to a stand a little farther on, where the donkey chaises—funny little ramshackle vehicles, drawn by three donkeys, harnessed abreast—were standing. After a very careful packing and stowing away, they all managed to get settled in one of the small carriages, and the donkeys started triumphantly on their progress towards the sea, the riders, like Johnny Gilpin's family, "all agog to dash through thick and thin."

The programme for these drives is about the oddest imaginable, and is peculiar to Southport, where the tide coming in spreads over miles and miles of sand, and the water is so shallow that half a mile from the shore it is scarcely a foot in depth. The donkey

carriages are driven into the sea, as far out as it will allow without entering the body of the carriage itself, and there they meander to and fro for an hour or two. A very queer way it seems of enjoying a drive; but the cheap trippers have great faith in it, and to judge from the number of vehicles in the water at one time, it must be immensely popular. The horses and donkeys take it quite kindly, and never make any resistance to entering the sea, be it ever so rough; indeed, it seems as exciting a proceeding to them as it does to the delighted occupants of the funny little carriages themselves.

An hour afterwards we caught sight of the blacksmith and his family again, coming up with the tide—the chaise deep in the water, the poor donkeys' noses just above it, and the excited little ones shouting with pleasure at this new and peculiar mode of progression, and enjoying their slow progress through the salt sea to the uttermost.

We moved on quite reluctantly. Half an hour had flown swiftly. Like shadows in a dream these unconscious people had passed before us; but in that short space of time a little part of their lives had passed into our keeping. We shall never see them again. They could neither give nor withhold the brief insight we obtained; but by that one vivid glimpse we could realize what manner of life was theirs. We know what sort of a home will be that of the lively bride and stolid bridegroom; of the honest burly blacksmith, and missus an' th' little uns—homes full of hard work, rough affection, and rude kindness. We can picture the room of the self-reliant, proud woman and her dying daughter. We know what a round of weary, mechanical toil is that of their daily lives; we can fancy what hard saving and scraping together goes on for weeks before to obtain that one day of pleasure; but it is scarcely in our power to realize what a bright, breezy day must be to their tired senses—what a relief the broad expanse, and fresh, ever-changing beauty of the rolling-in waves must be after months of monotonous, dreary work spent in the close alleys and narrow courts of a large town.

We little know or think of the intense delight a cheap trip must bring to thousands and thousands; what eager delight, what vivid, real brightness it brings into their lives; what a glimpse of real, stirring enjoyment! Ah! if we did, we should feel more kindly towards these great crowds of dusty, oily people, who jostle us off the

promenade, oust us from our seats, push us familiarly here and there, and are not given to politeness in any respect. We should not grudge them the brightest and best of everything. It is but for one day of their long year! When we think of what the others must be, it is easy to be in very special charity, even with these objectionable cheap trippers.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XXXI.

IT was certainly embarrassing, and very annoying, too; but who could have guessed that it was with the doctor's—I mean, with the baronet's—lovely daughter my unfortunate friend had so suddenly fallen in love, and for whom he had, in so cavalier a fashion, proposed?

In one sense, though, it was not such a very extraordinary occurrence after all; and I was a perfect idiot to have imagined for a moment that he could have been so speedily subdued by any other conqueror—especially by Miss St. Clair, whose charms might best be described by negatives.

Yes, it was particularly annoying; and the more so that we—that is, my wife and I—had been planning to bring about, in due course, the very thing that had so inopportunistically taken place, and which we had been stupid enough to misunderstand and overlook when it actually occurred.

But the mischief was done, and was, probably, irreparable. Still, Robert must by no means be permitted to run away; for the festivities at Ardmore had been the signal for a round of similar dissipations, and we had already been all invited for the following week to Moighrath Vicarage, where there was no telling what might happen.

The desponding whistle that expressed the state of my feelings when I learned the mistake I had made has been recorded on a preceding page; and for some minutes afterwards neither of us spoke.

Bob was the first to break the oppressive silence.

"Can I get into Pennyletter to-night?" he asked, in a most lugubrious tone of voice.

"No," I replied, "you cannot."

For in the meantime I had decided upon

a plan which I hoped would remedy the mischief that had been done.

"Why not?"

"Because it would be conduct quite unworthy of a soldier to turn about and fly at the very first encounter with the enemy. You must stay and face the foe. Who knows but you may conquer after all?"

"Bosh!" he exclaimed, shattering my warlike simile with a Turkish interjection now fairly naturalized among us.

"Nevertheless, you must stay," I persisted, disregarding the missile. "I will not allow you to run away. You shall not have my horse; and I'll desire Leary, the innkeeper, not to let you have one of his; and I know he won't if I tell him not to."

"I shall walk."

"Bosh!" I exclaimed, in my turn—"you'll do nothing of the sort. Come downstairs, and let us have our tea, which will be my dinner, and we can talk over it and see what is best to be done."

I finally persuaded my brother-in-law to remain, and trust to time to counteract the effects of the foolish and precipitate step he had taken.

"But first," I said, "you must tell me all that occurred."

"It was all your fault, and Emma's," he replied.

"A clear case of mistaken identity," said I. "Who could have imagined you'd have had the audacity to fall in love with, and propose for, the lord of the manor's daughter, before you had known her twelve hours, or spoken to her a couple of dozen words?"

"It was all your fault, and Emma's," he repeated.

"Granted—and as I suppose we must plead guilty to the indictment, you must give us an opportunity of trying to rectify the error. Emma has just shown me an invitation for next Friday which she has just received, and which extends to you as well as to us; Miss Middleton is also invited, and will probably be there."

"I shall not go."

"Yes, you will."

"Have it so; but you'll see."

"That's right. But you have not told me anything yet. You had best do so; for when I am acquainted with the whole of the facts I shall be in a better position to advise you."

"Well, as soon as dinner was over, I started off on foot for Ardmore, and, re-

membering Emma's caution, I took care not to walk too fast. When I arrived at the lodge, I rang the bell, and, to my surprise, the gate was opened by our old gardener's wife. I asked if Sir John was at home, and was told he was not. Was Miss Middleton? She was; but Sir John had just gone out with Mr. Dobbie. I went up to the house, and was shown into one of the rooms, where, after waiting a few minutes, she appeared. But there—I don't know anything more. I have seen beautiful women, but I never saw any one like her. My head went the way of my heart, and was lost; and I don't know what I said or did."

"Nonsense, Robert! Go on, man."

"Well, she seemed surprised to see me, and not quite sure who I was. Then she smiled and held out her hand—

"'Mr. M'Lachlan, is it not?'"

"I bowed, and touched her fingers, which perfectly electrified me. She then sat down, and asked me to do the same. I began to think I had made a mistake, but thought of all you and Emma said to me this morning, and gained courage."

"I hope Mrs. Cochrane got home safely last night?" she asked; and I said I believed she did, or had, or something. I suppose I looked like a fool, for she smiled, and, by Jove! that finished me—I really can't go on."

"Go on, boy, go on; my tea-dinner will be getting cold."

"Well, if I must—I coughed, 'Ahem!' and said—

"I hope you won't think me very presumptuous, Miss Middleton?"

"'Very likely I shall,' she replied, still smiling.

"That ought to have satisfied me, one would say; but I was so puffed up by all you two said, that I rushed blindly on to meet my fate. If you hadn't said what you did, I should not have made such an ass of myself."

"That's not the question, Bob."

"Isn't it? Very well. But it's very important to me, at least, that you should not forget it. I suppose she guessed what I was going to say, for she stood up and said—

"Pray excuse me, Mr. M'Lachlan—give my love to your sister."

"Oh, Miss Middleton," I cried out, falling down on my knees before her, "give it to me, for I love you to distraction."

"What did she say?"

"She started back a bit, and said, so grandly—

"'You forget yourself, sir—you are either mad or intoxicated.'

"She then rang the bell, and, as I continued kneeling like a fool, she said—

"'Get up, sir; don't expose your folly to the servants.'

"I jumped up, just as the footman opened the door, and bowing, managed somehow to get out of the room; but I heard her say—

"'John, if that gentleman calls again, he is not to be admitted.'

"I don't know how I got out of the house—but once outside, I ran the whole of the way home, and maybe I didn't pitch into Emma when I got in."

"You did—did you? I have a great mind to pitch into you, big as you are," I said, laughing. "But courage, old chap—there are more stars in the sky than ever fell down; and you must not be in such a hurry next time."

He consented to remain with us.

"If you keep your secret," I said, "Miss Middleton will not tell upon you, I feel sure."

The whole affair was so sudden, that I felt more inclined to laugh at Bob's discomfiture than to pity his outraged feelings, which I knew would soon recover their natural buoyancy; and I could not for the life of me pity him, or look upon the entire transaction otherwise than as a joke.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I HAVE already described, as far as it appears necessary to do so, the home of the St. Clairs. Its accommodation, it will be remembered, was limited; and how the vicar and his wife intended to dispose of the sixty or seventy people to whom they had sent invitations was more than a good many of their acquaintances could imagine. It is true the St. Clair family were adepts in the art of making the best of everything, and were gifted with the happy knack of ignoring discomfort and incongruity.

Sir John and Miss Middleton had signified their intention of being present at the fête; and it was believed by the vicar and Lady Georgina that every person they had asked would also come, if for no other reason than that the baronet and his strangely beautiful daughter were expected.

The Pendletons of Corkoney had written

to accept the Reverend Rupert and Lady Georgina St. Clair's kind invitation, and they were seven: the father and mother, four daughters, and a son.

The M'Creerys also were coming, and they were eight: four daughters, two sons, and the parents. It is needless to particularize the rest who had accepted their invitations—including, of course, all the Dumfernaghaleans; suffice it that sixty-seven people, exclusive of the inmates—augmented, too, for the occasion, by three Dublin cousins—were crowded into a space originally at most calculated to accommodate twenty-five. The result may be imagined.

The Reverend Rupert had no objection to dancing *per se* as an amusement.

"But, you know," he said to me one day, "I occupy a conspicuous position here, in the midst of an ignorant and uncultivated population, and if I were not very particular to avoid even the semblance of levity, I should give offence to some worthy but narrow-minded folk, and to others occasion to blaspheme; so that, although I do not prevent my daughters dancing when they are invited out, we have decided, my wife and I, to have no exhibitions of the light fantastic toe in the vicarage. Don't you think I am right?"

"Quite right," I assented; and asked—"But what are the people to do?"

"My young ones," he replied, "are posted up in all manner of evening amusements—forfeits, and what-not; and of course there will be music and singing."

I groaned in spirit, as I thought of the yellow-toothed piano; but my alarm was groundless, for the vicar continued—

"I have hired a grand pianoforte for the occasion from Pennyletter, and the organist of the cathedral is to bring his harp and violin, on both of which instruments he is a first-class performer. Of course we can count upon you for a song."

"Certainly," I replied; "but I hope the audience will be better-mannered than they were at the Castle; where the commencement of a song was the signal for a series of animated conversations, completely drowning the performer's voice. I hope you will keep your guests in better order, vicar; or I shall follow Miss Tolerton's example, and stop abruptly in the middle of the piece."

The vicar laughed.

"The folk hereabouts are not very musi-

cal, I fear; but I'll do my best to get you a fair hearing."

"I don't speak for myself, Mr. St. Clair, but for the general benefit."

The supper was to be laid in the dining-room, and the guests were, necessarily, to be crowded into the two apartments called respectively the drawing-room and parlour—nearly one hundred people in a space calculated to hold about one-fourth that number—where the greater portion were obliged to stand for lack of seats.

Sir John and Miss Middleton were among the early arrivals, and were seized on by the vicar and his wife, and escorted to the post of honour—the sofa in the bay-window of the drawing-room. Mr. St. Clair, however, was soon called away to assist in some mysterious operation of decanting, as well as I could gather from the semi-articulate murmurs of his son John, and transferred the entertainment of the baronet to his second daughter, Augusta, who was in conversation with my brother-in-law, who, poor fellow, looked crestfallen enough, but magnificent in his uniform, which Lady Georgina had specially requested he might wear.

The baronet looked uncommonly well for a man of sixty-five, but was to Robert as a domestic cat to a jungle tiger; but nevertheless was evidently gifted with superior attractions in the eyes of Augusta St. Clair—to judge, at least, by her manner, and the empressment with which she obeyed her father's call.

Miss Middleton was very simply dressed, in white muslin, without an ornament of any kind, except one red rose in her dark brown hair.

"Don't you think, Mrs. Cochrane," asked Lady Georgina, in the course of the evening, "that it is very bad taste of the heiress to come here in such a very simple costume, when I specially mentioned that it was to be a full dress reunion?"

Although Emma did not agree with her ladyship's opinion, she did not like to tell her so, and avoided a direct answer; for she, too, was dressed in white, and looked prettier, as I thought, than I had almost ever seen her.

Now, Lady Georgina and her daughters, on the contrary, were got up in very showy style—her ladyship appearing in a pink satin, which had belonged to her mother, the Countess of Sansterre.

The Misses St. Clair, who would have

looked to much greater advantage in white, were also bedecked in second-hand finery, and were shabby enough; whereas a few yards of new muslin would have been much less expensive, and have rendered the young ladies at least twice as attractive, besides being more in keeping with their position as the vicar's daughters.

"Where is the doctor—where is Doctor Cochrane?" was the query which presently reached my ears, in the shrill tones of Lady Georgina.

With much difficulty, I made my way through the crowd, and presented myself before her ladyship's throne, where I received a friendly greeting from Miss Middleton.

"I want you to sing, doctor," exclaimed her ladyship.

"I am at your service, madam," I replied. "What shall I sing?"

"Whatever you please, doctor; I leave the selection entirely to your discretion and good taste."

I bowed, and a fat lady who sat beside the vicar's wife remarked, taking close stock of me the while through an eyeglass—

"It is really very kind of you, doctor, to give your consent so readily; most amateurs require to be asked a dozen times. But perhaps you are a professional?"

"I have not that honour, madam," I replied, addressing the old woman, who, I afterwards learned, was no less a personage than the wife of the bishop of the diocese, who had, with two daughters, deigned to grace the St. Clair fête with her presence, although his lordship was engaged with some important work elsewhere, and unable to accompany them.

Lady Georgina, horrified to think that she could be suspected, even for a moment, of harbouring under her roof-tree such a being as a professional vocalist, hastily introduced me—

"Mrs. Church, permit me to introduce to you Doctor Cochrane, our dispensary medical officer. Doctor—Mrs. Church, the bishop's wife."

I bowed again—profoundly this time—for I needed to hide a smile, evoked by Lady Georgina's pompous manner; and the old lady was graciously pleased to say she had heard of me before.

"Favourably, I hope," I was mischievous enough to say, no longer trying to conceal the smile I really could not repress.

"Quite the contrary," replied the great lady, "or I should not have mentioned having heard of you at all. You are an intimate friend of Sir John Middleton's, I hear."

"Not an intimate friend," I answered; "I cannot pretend to that honour, madam. My father was, however; and I have known Sir John since I was quite a little boy."

"Indeed! I was given to understand you were on quite intimate terms."

"Sir John is most kind," I answered; "but I cannot lay claim to intimacy."

Miss Middleton had left her seat beside Lady Georgina, and had gone towards the open door leading out into the hall with Louisa St. Clair.

"Oh!"

Evidently, the interest felt in me by the lady bishop had undergone a diminution; for after delivering herself of the above recorded exclamation, she leaned back on the sofa, fanned herself vigorously, and quietly dismissed me from her thoughts.

"What are you going to sing?" once more demanded the Lady Georgina.

"Shall I give you a selection from 'Faust'?"

"'Faust'!" exclaimed Mrs. Church, whom the mention of that name had aroused from her state of introspection—"is not that an opera, Lady Georgina?"

"It is," I replied, seeing that the vicar's wife looked puzzled.

"Dear me, Lady Georgina, I trust you do not lend your countenance to anything so reprehensible?"

"Certainly not, Mrs. Church," hastily replied the vicar's wife, who adored the opera—"that is, if you have any objection."

"The bishop has always set his face steadily against such abominations."

"Excuse me, madam," I ventured to say, addressing the great lady—great in every sense of the word—"I draw a distinction between going to a theatre for the express purpose of hearing, or I should say seeing, an operatic performance—though many excellent people think it no harm to do that—and enjoying certain airs selected from one, and adapted for pianoforte recital."

"Hem!" coughed the lady, "really you must excuse me continuing the discussion, Mr.—ah—doctor—ah—"

I bowed, and in compliance with the reiterated request of my hostess, took my seat at the specially hired instrument from

Pennyletter; and, in spite of the ecclesiastical lady, played and sang a selection from "Faust," an opera which is a special favourite of mine.

The opera was new—in that part of the world, at least—and had a fair amount of success, the company generally suspending their conversation and flirtations to listen. When I had concluded, the applause was liberal, and the encore unanimous. I knew I had been chiefly invited for the purpose of amusing the other guests, and endeavoured to do so to the best of my ability; only desisting from my efforts when the hum of many voices in vigorous conversation completely drowned my performance. Then, glad of an opportunity to escape, I rose from the instrument, where my place was taken by some one else, and I made my way to the hall, and out on to the lawn.

The night was chilly enough; but the rooms were so very close that many had braved the freshness of the air, and preferred the risk of catching cold to being stifled.

Several couples were walking up and down upon the gravel path, and even on the damp grass; and amongst the number, to my astonishment, I perceived Miss Middleton and my brother-in-law, Sir John and the second Miss St. Clair. The first named were walking side by side, the latter arm-in-arm.

I made my way back into the drawing-room, and beckoned to my wife, who came to me at once; and drawing a shawl round her shoulders, we emerged into the open air.

"Look," I whispered.

Emma followed the direction of my finger, and a slight exclamation of surprise escaped her lips.

"Hasn't he cheek?" I began; but a pressure of my wife's arm against my side stopped me.

"Hush!" she whispered, and pointed to our right, where, partly concealed behind a clump of evergreens, stood the rector of Dumfernaghalee and Miss St. Clair.

I was struck by the ghastly expression of Charley's face in the full moonlight. He was evidently unmindful of his companion's prattle, and was watching, with knitted brow, Miss Middleton and Robert, as they walked up and down in deep converse. He was evidently trying to catch what they were saying.

I took care not to express my fears to my wife; but I dreaded a scene, and whispered—

"Had we not better interrupt Bob, and prevent him making a greater fool of himself than he has already done?"

"I would not interfere," replied my wife; "they seem to have made it up. But do look at Augusta. How she hangs on the old gentleman's arm, and how bewitchingly she looks up into his face. Artful little puss! He seems bored to death with her. It would be charity to break up their tête-à-tête."

"I shouldn't interfere," I said, in my turn; "but I don't like the look in the rector's eyes. Seems to me he is working himself into a passion. He is jealous of Bob."

"He has no right to be," replied my Emma, quickly. "I'm sure Bob would not look at poor Mrs. Woodward, if there wasn't another woman left in the world."

"I don't suppose he would," I answered, laughing outright; "but he is looking, and very willingly, too, at Miss Middleton."

"Well, what is that to Mr. Woodward?"

"It certainly ought to be nothing," I returned; "but I am afraid it irritates him, and he is going to act the part of the dog in the manger. I only hope he won't forget himself, and say anything uncivil; for I know that Bob dislikes him, and would repay him in his own coin, for all his cloth."

"Had we not better make a diversion in that quarter, and prevent him?" asked my wife.

"I think so," I said.

But at the same instant Mrs. Woodward made her appearance from the house, and perceiving us, asked if we had seen her husband.

Before either my wife or I could reply, she caught sight of him where he stood with Miss St. Clair; and hastily stepping up to him, laid her hand heavily on his arm, and said—

"Charles, I want to go home."

"Well, go," he answered, shaking off her arm—"I don't want to keep you here."

"Come with me—I am not at all well," she continued, speaking with a husky voice, and really plaintive manner.

"Not I," he replied, ignoring her complaint—"I am not going for hours yet."

"Can I get you anything, Mrs. Woodward?" then inquired Miss St. Clair, who was a good-natured girl, and saw that the

poor lady was really suffering. "Do come in and have a glass of wine."

Before the rector's wife could reply, Miss Middleton and Robert joined us.

"You are looking ill, Mrs. Woodward," remarked the former, looking fixedly at Charles as she spoke. "Rector, why don't you take your wife in?" And then, seeing he hesitated, she continued—"Come, Mrs. Woodward, give me your arm."

Charles turned scarlet with indignation, not unmixed with shame. It was a well-merited rebuke, and I was not sorry to have seen it administered.

"You are very kind, Miss Middleton," he said, haughtily; "but I can take care of Mrs. Woodward. Come, Matilda," he exclaimed, drawing his wife's arm through his own, and leading her towards the house—Miss St. Clair following, or rather walking beside them.

"How have you enjoyed yourself, Mrs. Cochrane?" then asked the heiress, turning to my wife.

"Very much indeed," replied poor Emma, vainly endeavouring to repress a yawn.

"So I should imagine," laughed Miss Middleton. "It is more than I have done; and had it not been for your brother, who took pity upon me, wrapped me up in somebody's shawl, and brought me out here, I must have been suffocated."

"It is very warm inside," I remarked.

"I should say it was," replied the heiress, "and that must be my excuse for running away while you were delighting us all with your singing, doctor."

"Pray don't mention it, Miss Middleton," I said, uncertain whether she was making fun of me or not.

"I feel that it was an unkind thing to do," she continued; "but I saw you had made a conquest, and so I regarded my own defection as a matter of no consequence."

"A conquest?" I repeated, helplessly.

"Yes, a decided conquest: what do you say to that, Mrs. Cochrane?"

Emma smiled, but attempted no answer; and Miss Middleton explained.

"The stout lady—Mrs. Cathedral, I think Lady Georgina called her—wife of a dean, or a bishop, is she not?"

"Ha! ha!" I laughed; "you are facetiously inclined, Miss Middleton."

"Am I?" tossing her head, "I was not aware of it." Then turning to my brother-in-

law, she said—"Faithful and true knight, I require you to escort me to the supper-room. I see people going in that direction, which reminds me that I am hungry."

Bob, all alacrity, offered his arm, which was accepted.

"Are you not coming?" asked the heiress, looking back at us.

I replied in the negative, for I wanted to speak to my wife; and Robert escorted the lady into the house.

"He has evidently made it all right there," I said to Emma, when they had left us by ourselves.

"I don't fancy so," she replied. "He would not look so quiet and subdued if he had. I rather think she has been giving him a scolding."

"Possibly; and perhaps she wants to give Charley a setting down. He was too conspicuously attentive in the early part of the evening, and I saw she was displeased."

"I am sure she is a good girl, Tom, in spite of her affectation of levity; and I think she has gone in now, as she came out before, for no other purpose than just to watch her father and Augusta."

"Do you think so, dear?"

"I do. I noticed how she kept her eyes fixed on them all the time she stood talking to us, as well as while she was walking up and down with Robert on the lawn."

The supper was an awful scramble. No one sat down, for the very best of reasons—that there were no chairs on which to sit; and everyone devoured what he or she could lay hold of standing.

I suppose my exertions at the piano had given me an appetite, for I felt really hungry, and vainly endeavoured to persuade my wife to face the crush in the supper-room. So I left her sitting on the stairs with Mrs. Dobbie, and contrived to force my way into the room; but there was such a crowd and such confusion there, that I had to return as I went; and on regaining my wife heard that the rector and Mrs. Woodward had gone home, without the poor lady having had the hysterical attack I had apprehended.

We were all weary; and when I discovered Bob, moping by himself in a corner, I beckoned to him, and giving him his sister in charge, set off on an expedition among the back premises of the vicarage, for the purpose of finding my man, and ordering round the car.

After a prolonged search, during which I

stumbled over a variety of articles—for the moon, which had been shining brightly a short time previously, was now clouded over—I found Isaac coiled up fast asleep on some hay in a corner of the coach-house; and having roused him, not without difficulty, desired him to put the horse to, and come round for us directly. This he did as expeditiously as it was in his nature to do anything; and having quietly taken leave of our hosts, we set out on our homeward journey—well satisfied, on the whole, that our day's pleasure was at an end.

UNCLE BUNCOMBE'S CHEESE.

WE were indeed surprised!

Uncle Buncombe, who had never been to us more than a relative who was known to possess large testamentary powers, which we were always under the impression he intended to use to our benefit, had at length thought it expedient to augment our affection for him by the bestowal of a Christmas gift!

Yes; he who had hitherto imagined that every shilling he could spend to our advantage would be a shilling wasted, had so far abandoned his theory as to present to my wife and myself a Stilton cheese which could not have been purchased under eighteen-pence a pound.

Of course, as in duty bound, we wrote to him by the next post, acknowledging his handsome gift, and pathetically winding up by endeavouring to estimate the loss we had suffered from our not having been before on so intimate terms with our benefactor as we could have desired.

Uncle Buncombe was not particularly fond of writing letters, so we were not at all surprised to receive no reply to our loving, but, I am afraid, rather hypocritical, epistle.

Neither my wife nor I had had much experience in getting a Stilton cheese to that degree of ripeness which suits an epicurean taste; but we both determined to use every effort to do justice to Uncle Buncombe's magnificent present. We hunted up every authority on the subject of the cultivation of the Stilton with such earnestness, that in a few days, with all the various methods clashing together in our heads, we were rather more in the dark than we were before. Intimate friends were interviewed on the subject, and acquaintances were implored to give us the benefit of all knowledge they possessed. We

were in a state of chronic Stilton in the head. At length we gathered that the cheese should be kept damp, and that a little wine or beer poured on it occasionally would materially improve its condition.

But, alas! our stock of wine was barely sufficient for our own consumption, and we could not afford to use it even for the benefit of Uncle Buncombe's cheese; so the only course left us was to place it beneath the beer-tap, where it would, without doubt, receive enough moisture to answer every purpose. That was an imposing ceremony, when I, followed by my wife, the servants, and the children, entered the cellar, bearing in my hands the precious cheese. Having carefully placed my burden beneath the tap of the beer-barrel, in a position where all the stray drops would fall, I earnestly recommended it to the careful attention of all present, and left in a state of anxious excitement.

During the ensuing week, my wife's first words on my return home each evening were that the cheese—which, with a delicacy perfectly my own, I had christened "Uncle Buncombe"—was improving in the most satisfactory manner under the treatment we had devised for him. Thus, the opening conversation that took place between us was usually as follows:—

"Oh! Harry, dear, you have no idea how Uncle Buncombe is getting on; he is in the most inviting condition, and I feel tempted to taste him every day."

To which I used to reply—

"I'm very glad to hear it."

A week had passed away, and not till then did I pay my first visit to our uncle in his domain downstairs. But Uncle Buncombe was too dry!

I saw it at a glance, and instantly commanded the servant to wrap him up in a damp cloth, and allow the beer to run more freely upon him. It was done, and I left for town the next morning in a serene state of mind. I had business that day which was disagreeable to me in the extreme, and I returned home in the evening very displeased with myself and every one else.

My wife opened the door to me—in tears.

In tears!—a state she had never been in since the day I married her; some misfortune, then, must have happened.

"Oh, Harry," she cried, "that foolish girl has allowed the beer to run all night,

and it" (she couldn't call "it" Uncle Buncombe then) "is in such a state."

I stayed to hear no more, but flew past her, stumbling over my new hat in doing so, and examined that cheese.

Such a state! I should think it was! From the very extreme of dryness, Uncle Buncombe had gone to the very extreme of moisture.

What was to be done? I consulted with my wife, and we determined to test its qualities.

It appeared: we tested it. If Uncle Buncombe had been soused in the dirty fish-pond at the end of the garden for a week, and then had been served up to table, he could not have been worse in flavour than he was that evening. He was strong, but his strength constituted his weakness; and in so wet a condition that to masticate a mouthful was the work of a quarter of an hour. All our labour was lost, and nothing remained but to rid ourselves of him. But what should we do with him? how should we dispose of him? I suggested to my wife that the servants should finish him, but she immediately began to speak of long doctors' bills, and my motion was not carried.

Should we bury him, and endeavour to forget that we ever had a cheese?

Yes, that seemed to be the only practical idea that occurred to us; so Uncle Buncombe's cheese was forthwith carried from the room, and laid beneath the soil.

We had just seated ourselves again, and were discussing a new subject, when a rat-tat-tat sounded at the hall door, and the servant entered with a letter for me.

Strange handwriting: shaky and ill-formed!

It read thus:—

"MY DEAR HARRY—I shall be coming to town on Saturday night. I will drop in to your place on Sunday to dinner, when we will discuss the merits of that Stilton I sent you.—Yours affectionately,

"ALFRED BUNCOMBE."

Uncle Buncombe!

The letter dropped from my hand, and I concentrated my gaze upon my wife's face. Her eyes fell, so did mine, and we both riveted our attention on to the table cloth.

That confounded cheese!

However, after a short interval we began to talk rationally of the affair, and determined to put the best face on the matter. The next day (Saturday) passed quickly

away, and on the Sunday afternoon, true to his word, Uncle Buncombe made his appearance.

We put on a very welcome expression of countenance, keeping of course in view the aforesaid testamentary powers, and sat down to a very excellent dinner. Not a word concerning the cheese escaped us, and Uncle Buncombe seemed disinclined to make any remarks regarding it.

The fish, meat, and pastry had been cleared away, when a large slice of Cheshire cheese, looking exceedingly like a piece of yellow soap, appeared; and, as I watched Uncle Buncombe's face, I saw a shade of disappointment mount to his brow. His eyes were raised from the cheese, and met mine.

"My dear Harry," he said, in a pleasant voice, as if determining to render everything pleasant if possible, "I fancied I spoke in my letter to you of a desire to taste the Stilton I sent you."

"So you did, dear uncle," I returned, looking as comfortable as past events would allow me; "but the servant seems to think it is not in a fit condition yet to produce at table."

"Not in a fit condition! Bring it up, young woman—I am the best judge of that," fixing his eyes upon the servant.

I gave her an admonitory glance, but she only turned a deep crimson colour, and replied—

"Please, sir, it's gone."

"What's gone?"

"It's buried, sir."

"What's buried?" continued Uncle Buncombe, at the same time half rising from his chair.

"The cheese, sir."

"The cheese!—buried!"

"My dear uncle," I interposed, casting a look full of the most affectionate regard at him, "unfortunately, the cheese you sent us, through the carelessness of one of our servants, lapsed into a very unhealthy condition—so much so, that we were obliged to get rid of it by burying it in our garden."

"What, sir!" he replied, in the most wrathful manner, "you cannot dare to tell me that the excellent Stilton I sent you, and for which I paid a very high price, has been so cruelly treated that it is absolutely unfit for use?"

"I do, indeed, uncle," I replied.

"Then, sir," said he, "allow me to tell

you that, in using my present so ungratefully, you have forfeited for ever my esteem and regard for you; and if ever I enter your house again, or communicate with you in any way—"

"Stay, uncle," interposed my wife; "we did everything—"

"I shall not stay—I leave this house immediately."

And so he did; and whether that unfortunate Stilton will be the cause of my losing a valuable legacy I cannot say, but it certainly appears to me that I have small chance of ever receiving anything more from the hands of "dear old Uncle Buncombe."

TABLE TALK.

IN giving a telegram respecting the departure of the pilgrims, the *Daily News* says: "On leaving the pier at Newhaven, the Paray colours were run up at the foremast, the banner of the Sacred Heart flying from the mizenmast. There was a small crowd assembled to witness the departure, and as the steamer moved off a gentleman rushed to the front, and, shaking his umbrella at the departing pilgrims, shouted out, 'You are a disgrace to your country.' This was the only manifestation of feeling displayed, and the crowd remained silent after having satisfied its curiosity." Is not this a mistake, owing to wrong conception of the telegraph clerk who read the message? It could hardly have been a person of the "male persuasion" who so behaved; it looks so much like the action of that modern Mrs. Gamp, familiarly known to the public by the name of Brown.

AS TRUTHFUL JAMES says—

"Do I sleep, do I dream?

Do I wonder and doubt?

Are things what they seem?

Or is visions about?"

Has it come to this, that our pilgrim labours along the road no more with peas boiled or unboiled in his shoes, or even without; but does his pilgrimage in ignoble ease? Certainly, in these modern days, one does not look for cockle hat and sandal shoon; but to go by special train, first and second class, and previously to pay a visit to Cook's Tourist Office to obtain tickets, gives so unromantic a twang to the affair, really answers so to the boiling of the peas, that one asks whether it is not after all a mistake—whether

things are what they seem. Anyhow, if this sort of thing takes, the sooner a company is started with full permission and support to make a line for the Mussulmen to Mecca the better. What a traffic they would do: special trains, Mecca and back for so much! The line might be slight, and the signal work carelessly attended to; for what would it matter to the pilgrims if there should be a few frightful accidents, when the prophet's paradise would be so near?

A DAILY PAPER says, respecting the late accident on the District Railway, it "appears to have been caused, first, by the engine becoming disabled, which caused the train to come to a standstill in the tunnel, and next by defective signaling. One of the employés has been suspended." Does this mean hung? In the first exasperation of the moment, one feels disposed to think that this ought to be the case. But about the signaling. Is the block system to be proved a delusion and a snare?

ROGUES ARE CONTINUALLY having the fact impressed upon them that honesty is the best policy. In the case of the Bank forgers, for instance, the addition to the sentence of penal servitude for life whereby the prisoners were ordered to pay the cost of the prosecution, was a somewhat novel proceeding, and the reason it was adopted was this:—The prisoners were only tried upon one charge, and it was a question whether the presiding judge would have the power of ordering the American bonds and other property, valued altogether at something like £90,000, which were found in the prisoners' possession, to be delivered up. By act of Parliament, however, a judge has the power to order a prisoner convicted of any offence to pay the costs to which the prosecutors have been subjected; and any property found in the possession of the prisoner may be devoted to the same object.

THE POOR DISCIPLES of the pipe get so tremendously thrashed on all sides, that, when opportunity serves, though no lover of the herb oneself, it seems only fair to take the part of the weak, though their number is strong—many-legged, one might say. The smokers have their own special organ, the *Tobacco Leaf*; but as that is devoted to the praise of the fumes, its announcements may remain untouched; but here is one

from the *Lancet*, sage and venerable guardian of the public health. In giving advice to officers and others bound for the Gold Coast, in the Ashantee expedition, among a string of wise cautions as to dress, sleep, and what to eat, drink, and avoid, it says: "And we would advise them all to get revaccinated, and those who smoke to carry a supply of tobacco for their pipes."

ONE CERTAINLY could not help feeling a certain amount of sympathy for the unfortunate little boys who, for the sin of angling in St. James's Park ornamental water, were haled before the judge, and reprimanded, if not punished, for the very innocent offence. At first one felt disposed to look upon it as a piece of obnoxious, tyrannical, official Bumbledom; but since in court the other day, "in reply to Mr. Flowers, a constable in one of the cases said that the objection which was raised to fishing was that the water-fowl, or American divers, generally dived under the water and seized the bait of the youthful anglers, the result being that they broke the lines and escaped with the hooks in their mouths, and the birds were sometimes found dead from this cause," one becomes reasonable, and acquiesces in the justice of putting an end to the practice, inasmuch as, to quote an old joke, there are divers reasons for its being stopped.

TWO FRIENDS MEETING, one, in the course of conversation, announced the coming wedding of certain people well on in years. "But," said the recipient of the news, "what can Mrs. S. be about? J. has one foot in the grave; and it is a well-known fact that he is slightly insane—touched—cracked." "Exactly," said the other; "and so he marries. Nothing makes cracked china last so long as getting it riveted."

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 299.

September 20, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE POUDRE D'ENFER.



UI! It was at the shop of Hippolyte Lalande, boot and shoe maker after the French fashion, that Lemaire passed, a day or two after Rivière and his wife had become domiciled in Soho. Monsieur Lalande's place of business was only in the next street, and he supplemented it by letting out the whole of the upper part of the house to

ladies and gentlemen who found London a safer home than Paris under his Majesty, King Louis Philippe. Monsieur Lalande was a very dark gentleman, with eyes that seemed all pupil; hair all short black brush, which came to a black point in the centre of his white forehead; while this same white forehead went up on either side into a white point in his black hair. He seemed to wear three crisp black moustaches—one over each eye, and one under his nose; while all the rest of his round face was of a blue tinge, from close shaving of the stiff black stubble that eternally forced itself through the skin.

Monsieur Hippolyte was prosperous, and wore very white linen. He was a shoemaker; but his hands were white, and very deft at rolling up tiny cigarettes in rice paper, which he took from a little book of leaves. But then Monsieur Hippolyte never worked at the trade, inasmuch as it occupied his time to receive and send out orders, and to collect his rents.

Besides, did not Monsieur Hippolyte take deep interest in the affairs of the French nation, and speak in the discussions which took place upstairs? Yes.

Lemaire came to the door where Monsieur Hippolyte was smoking dreamily, and watching Paris—mentally, of course—for it was the fashion in his neighbourhood to watch Paris. Monsieur Hippolyte and his dear friends loved the beautiful city, and were ever waiting to give up the shoemaking, and baking, and charcutier's trades, and to go across, singing "*Mourir pour la Patrie*," and set people of excitable temperaments to pull up the paving stones, build barricades, and get bullets in their lungs; while Monsieur Hippolyte et Cie. became statesmen, and climbed to power for the time being, setting the whole nation to rights till the arrival of a coup d'état, or some other unpleasantness, which should sweep them from power; when, if they were on the alert, they crossed the Channel once more, and recommenced business in Soho until such time as it should seem suitable to go across to die for their country again—by deputy.

Monsieur Hippolyte, then, was watching Paris; and Monsieur Lemaire—for the time being and his own ends also a watcher of Paris—raised his hat half an inch and his eyebrows a quarter.

Monsieur Hippolyte removed his cigarette with one hand—gracefully, of course—raised his hat a full inch and his eyebrows half, and then said—

"Yes."

Then he turned in at the side door, after glancing to see whether madame was on guard; and madame proving to be on the watch, Monsieur Hippolyte led the way slowly upstairs, pausing to recover breath at each landing, till the attic floor was reached, and here a sound that had been on the increase as they ascended now became very audible.

Tink! clink!—tink! clink!—tink! clink! As they stood listening the sound ceased, and was succeeded by the rattle and clang of a vice, as if something had been screwed up—an idea verified the moment after by the sound of file biting upon iron—scarp! scarp! scarp!—till they opened the door, and entered a large, low, sloping-roofed room, which extended all over the top of the house.

It was a singular-looking place, that attic, lit by three dormer windows, the two front appertaining to the sitting-room of the occupant, which also in one corner contained the bed, while the third gave light to the back part of the attic, which was a curious mingling of the engineer's workshop and the chemist's laboratory. On one side was a lathe, on the other a table covered with bottles, retorts, receivers, and stands. Beneath the window was a smith's bench, with vice, and rows of files and other tools; while the fireplace, in front of which stood a tiny anvil and block, was half furnace half forge, with a neatly formed pair of heavily-weighted bellows hard by.

A strip of wood, a couple of inches high, was nailed across the floor, to separate the workshop dirt from the cleanliness of the larger portion of the apartment, which was comfortably furnished, and contained a piano; while flowers were plentiful in the windows, and counteracted, with their air of refinement, the rough aspect given by the grim appurtenances of the back portion of the attic.

For a moment the visitor might have imagined that another Rivière was domiciled here; but a glance at the work in progress showed how different it was from the mechanical contrivances of the little Frenchman when he was at home and in peace before the seizure.

Monsieur Hippolyte seemed quite at home here, for he entered without knocking; and it was evidently far from being the first visit of Lemaire, who, after saluting the presiding genius of the place, drew forward a chair, and sat himself cross-legged thereon.

The occupant of the room was in a closely fitting blouse, which buckled round the waist; and the sleeves were rolled back from his bony wrists, leaving his small but nervous hands free for the task upon which he was engaged. Like Monsieur Hippolyte, he, too, seemed to have been lately suffering from a brain fever, for his black hair was so

closely cut that it stood up in an even pile; but here the resemblance ceased, for Monsieur D'Aulnay wore a closely trimmed, crisp beard, which clothed the whole of the lower part of his face, making it all black, save when his closely set eyes twinkled, and seemed to set free a pair of hard trap jaws, which unclosed to display a set of extremely white teeth.

"Well, Doctor," said Lemaire, "and how does it progress?"

"To a marvel," said D'Aulnay. "Look."

Hastily throwing down the tool with which he had been at work upon something which looked like half an iron orange, screwed up in the vice, he walked to a shelf, and took down a stoppered bottle.

"Perseverance!" he said, with triumph flashing out of his wicked-looking eyes. "Who shall say that the children of La France do not work for her? See here, Lemaire: Hippolyte Lalande will tell you how I have sat night after night over my fire to make this. Failure, failure, failure—always failure! But at last—behold!"

He held out the bottle, full of a powder, in triumph.

"We might have bought it? True. But then these barbarous islanders must know why you buy it—what you would do with it—where you live; and then the suspicious canaille go to the bureau of the police. Bah! I make it myself, and behold!"

He removed the stopper from the bottle, and, taking up a quill pen, took out a small portion of the powder, which he threw down upon the floor.

It was as though anybody had dashed down a pinch of snuff; but the effect made the countenance of Lemaire to change to a deadly, sallow grey, though he did not move his chin from the arms which rested crossed upon the chair back. All the same, though, a glistening, dewy, cold sweat broke out upon his forehead, which he did not dare to wipe lest he should betray himself.

For as the little dust of powder touched the floor, it exploded with a keen, sharp, deafening crack, which, differing from the ordinary report of gunpowder, seemed to have with it a strange metallic ring that threatened to split the tympanum, and left a singing noise in the ears for a minute afterwards.

The report was so loud that the casements quivered, and the wires of the piano gave forth a jarring, discordant twang; while,

with the bottle held aloft in his left hand, the Doctor stood preserving the attitude which he had adopted in hurling the diabolical powder to the ground.

"Behold," he said again, "the poudre d'enfer for the enemies of my country."

"Magnificent! It is grand!" exclaimed Monsieur Hippolyte, waving his lighted cigarette in dangerous proximity to the bottle.

Lemaire did not speak, but sat thinking of the quantity of the powder contained in that bottle. Suppose a spark should reach it from the cigarette! Suppose D'Aulnay should, in his excitement, throw down more, and it should communicate with the bottle! Or suppose he should let the bottle slip from his fingers, what would be the result? There could be no doubt of that: the roof, the greater part of the house, and of those right and left, blown to dust, and its occupants hurled hundreds of yards in fragments. He did not move; but the tiny dew which glistened upon his forehead grew into beads, and the beads ran one into the other; and then, always growing, began to trickle slowly down his face.

"And you, Lemaire—what do you think?"

"It is wonderful," he said, hoarsely.

"Would you like to see?"

Lemaire took the bottle held out to him, and longed to hurl it through the window, far away from where they stood; but he restrained himself, and gently handed it back.

"Ah," said D'Aulnay, laughing, "you may well use care. My faith, it is strong. Why, if I were to shake it up too hard, it would explode. Shall I try?" he said, with a fiendish grin.

It was evidently said to test the courage of Lemaire; but he neither moved nor answered, leaving it to Hippolyte—who, however, was perfectly calm and unmoved as he responded—

"No, my friend; our beautiful France cannot spare three such children as we. Let us keep the glorious powder to scatter amongst her foes."

"Good," said D'Aulnay; and he carefully closed the bottle, and replaced it on his shelf.

"Ah," he said, as he pointed at the innocent-looking row of glasses, "there would not be much left of this street if one of those were to explode."

"Nor its people," said Lemaire, huskily.

By way of answer, D'Aulnay gave his shoulders a shrug which took them nearly to his ears.

"But the shells—how go the shells?" said Hippolyte. "I have not seen since yesterday."

Lemaire rose now, stifling a sigh of relief, and striving hard to conceal the ghastly look which he felt sure was upon his face in an aspect of interest in that which he was to see. But D'Aulnay evidently saw it, and smiled to himself as he led the way to his bench.

"See," he said, taking up a file, "this is how I work for the good cause."

The next moment he was rasping off tiny fragments of iron from the cup-like piece upon which he was engaged.

"There," he said, laying down his file, and turning the screw of the vice so as to loosen the iron—"there, is not that smooth, and perfect, and admirable? The iron is hard—very hard and brittle. It will hardly yield to the tools when I turn it. But what will you? It must not be rough, or it would not shatter when the powder shall explode."

He handed the cup—which was a perfect half-sphere of about three-eighths of an inch in thickness—from one to the other; and then, taking up another finished half from the bench, he fitted them together to show his visitors how they formed an iron ball about the same in size as the leather sphere used for cricket, which it was not much unlike in the way it joined, saving that the metal looked new and bright.

"It is beautiful—what pains we take for these people!—is it not?" said D'Aulnay. "What a magnificent shell this will be! I shall fill it with a mixture of my powder, and then bind the joint with an iron ring, closing it safely, so that it must break elsewhere—when the explosion follows. I shall make twenty-four of these for the dear friends who keep us here—twenty-four; although the labour is great, and the cost of the powder is frightful. But it is only an investment—eh, Lalande? We shall have it back from the brigands, with an interest on our expenditure that shall frighten them."

"T is so," said Monsieur Hippolyte. "We shall not fail this time, mark me—we shall not fail. It was a cursed folly, that last time. Our friends were too eager, and spoiled all."

"That poor lad Pierre is dead. Did you know?" said Lemaire.

"My faith!—my poor nephew!" said D'Aulnay. "No."

"Yes, in trying to escape from prison with Rivière."

"Ah, yes—the poor fellow who was taken."

"Yes. Pierre was shot," said Lemaire.

"He shall be avenged. Many deaths shall pay for his, poor lad. But are you sure?"

"Certain," said Lemaire. "I have it on good authority; and besides, it is here, in the provincial paper."

He handed the sheet which he took from his pocket; and, after reading it, D'Aulnay turned aside, evidently much moved.

"Poor boy!—poor boy!" he muttered again and again. "This should not have been. Only another month, my brothers, and we would have gone over and set him free, with many more. But he shall be avenged."

Monsieur Hippolyte set his teeth, grinned savagely, and went about the room gesticulating.

"But the other—Rivière—what became of him?" said D'Aulnay, suddenly turning upon Lemaire.

"Escaped."

"Good. He deserved to escape. Poor fellow, he was innocent. It was an ill fate which led to his seizure. Some villain must have denounced him for a grudge."

Lemaire sat unmoved till the other had finished, and then he said—

"They escaped together. Pierre was shot, and Rivière got away; but, like a fool, must go straight to Paris."

"Where he was taken?"

Lemaire nodded.

"Poor fool! poor fool!" ejaculated Monsieur Hippolyte. "It is so: these men are like the moths—they fly round and round the candle until their wings are singed."

Lemaire Hippolyte made the remark in all good faith, not then able to see any resemblance to his metaphor in the acts of himself and his confrères; and he kept on walking up and down the room, while D'Aulnay bit at his moustache, and fitted together the shell he was making, rubbing the edges together; and at times, as he held a half-sphere in each hand, tapping them together cymbal-fashion. Then he fitted them closely, took up a piece of tape, and bound it round and round, ending by tying it securely, and holding the iron ball in his hand.

"Perdition to all our enemies!" he said. "France shall be cleared of the canaille who hold her by the throat and trample upon her, poor fair mother! Ah, my brothers, the time is nearly here, and this cursed land of fog shall know us no more. Lalande—Lemaire," he cried fiercely, as he held the empty shell as if about to hurl it, "France shall be free, and so shall Rivière!"

"No!" said Lemaire, fiercely, "not so!"

"What!" exclaimed the others in a breath.

"France shall be free, but Rivière shall die."

"And why?"

"Because he is a traitor."

"Pish! my friend—you hate him for some reason."

"Let that be as it may," said Lemaire; "listen here. Rivière escaped to Paris—Rivière was taken again—Rivière is free! What does that mean?"

"My faith, how should I know?" asked D'Aulnay, contemptuously.

"I will tell you," said Lemaire, in a hoarse voice. "Rivière is seeking his revenge upon us for his incarceration. He is on our track—in the pay of the police."

The others started now.

"You dream," said D'Aulnay.

"Wait and see," said Lemaire. "You shall judge. I tell you he is a spy in the pay of the French police, and on our track—watching us. He was at rendezvous after rendezvous but a few days back."

"And where is he now?" said Lalande, with eyebrows and moustache bristling.

"In the next street."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"I MUST NOT TELL."

"OH, Dick, how dare you!" exclaimed Lady Lawler, whose cheeks were crimson. "What does this mean? Why, that poor Monsieur Rivière has been taken ill, and I could not ring for the servants. Come here!"

"I'll see you—"

"Come here, Dick," cried her ladyship, more loudly.

Sir Richard Lawler, looking very ugly and vindictive, came there.

"Now pick poor Monsieur Rivière up, and lay him on that couch."

Sir Richard strode so fiercely forward to effect the task that his lady arrested him.

"Stop!" she cried, loudly, and he stopped.

"Now," she said, looking him determinedly

in the face, "lift him up, Dick, gently, and without hurting him, and lay him down softly. If you do it roughly, Dick, I'll give such a shriek as will bring all the servants up to see what's the matter."

Sir Richard Lawler passed his hand over his forehead, which was rather damp, and he exhaled his breath in that half-whistle best expressed by the word "Phew!" Then, as obedient as a big boy, he placed one hand under Rivière's back and the other beneath his legs, and lifted him easily to the couch, where Lady Lawler punched and arranged the pillows for his reception.

The poor fellow sank down amongst the soft cushions with a sigh of content; while Lady Lawler button-holed her husband with a hooked finger of the left hand, and led him to the other end of the room, behind the couch; then shaking her right forefinger in his face, she said, in a half-whisper, and with a shake of her head—

"Ugh! How dare you look at me like that, sir? Dick, if we were alone, I'd box both your ears."

Sir Richard growled out something unintelligible, all but two words, and those were—

"Head—shoulder!"

"Pshaw!" ejaculated Lady Lawler, contemptuously. "But I've found it out now, Dick—I know it; and I was such a brute that I could not see it before. Poor man, he's faint for want of food."

"For want of kicking out of the house," growled Sir Richard.

"Dick, make him drink a glass of wine," said his wife, imperiously.

Sir Richard slowly filled the glass, after rinsing it out with sherry, and pouring the rinsings into the flower vase. Then he held it up to the light, smelt it, and drank it with gusto, as if he needed something to calm his perturbed spirit. Then he once more went through the rinsing process, filled the glass, and, raising Rivière, held it to his lips.

After a few moments, Rivière slowly drank the wine, sank back, and then raised himself.

"I am better," he said, apologetically, and with a weary, sad look in his face that disarmed Sir Richard. "It was weak and foolish of me, but I was not well. You will excuse it, miladi—Sir Richard? A biscuit? Yes, I thank you."

He sat eating the biscuit for a few minutes, and then rose, saying—

"I am much better now. It was a strange end to our lesson, Lady Lawler; but we will do better another time."

"Oh, yes, of course," said his pupil. "You were too poorly to give it this morning, and I did not see. But you will come on Friday?"

Rivière was silent.

"Of course you will come on Friday," repeated Lady Lawler. "Richard," she cried, with a half-stamp of her foot, "ask Monsieur Rivière to be sure and come on Friday."

"Yes, to be sure," said the baronet. "You'll be sure and come on Friday?"

Rivière looked doubtfully from one to the other, till Lady Lawler came forward and placed her hand in his.

"You must come on Friday, Monsieur Rivière," she said; and he started as she spoke—for the act was so delicately done that he was taken by surprise—for, as Lady Lawler pressed his hand, it was to leave in it a couple of sovereigns.

What should he do? Refuse them? Give them back indignantly? His first wish was to do so, for it was repugnant to his feelings to have to take money from these friends; but he recalled the fact the next moment that, though generously paid, this was the wage that he had earned, and that he had a right to it; that he must take it for Marie's sake, for were they not very poor?

"Yes, I will come on Friday," said Rivière, rising; "and I will not be weak and ill like this, Sir Richard. I thank you both much for your kindness."

He turned abruptly, and left the room; for he was still weak, and he did not wish it to be seen. In fact, he had to stop twice on the staircase to dash away the tears that would come. He managed to hide them at last, and strode out of the great house, feeling light-hearted and joyous; for had he not earned money? did he not possess the means of living?

His bright sky became overcast, though, before he had half crossed the square, for he felt that there was charity mingled with the payment. Yes, there was charity in the generous remuneration. But, after all, it was Lady Lawler's generosity, and she was rich. It was a friendly act, and there was no need for him to refuse.

"She is a noble woman," he muttered as he went on, "in spite of her weaknesses."

Yes, she is weak; but then is it not given to all women to be weak? Were they not weak, they could not be so sweet, and soft, and gentle. But there, Marie, my child! you need not fear—I am thine only. Yet, for your sake, I must not tell you that I have been."

IN FANTI LAND.—III.

OUR toilet completed, we issued forth to our sylvan breakfast-room. The table was neatly but plainly spread; but finger glasses and napkins I noticed, and some rare old china and Venetian glass, engraved with a Danish coat of arms. One or two curiously engraved pieces of plate were about too; and a rich damask table cloth told of bygone days of luxury and wealth.

Our host was deep in a Spanish edition of "Don Quixote." Poor fellow, he had been something of the kind in his youth, and had retired to this plantation, where, under the sobriquet of the Hermit, he passed a life devoid of care or anxiety, but far different from the one he had aspired to. He was the eldest son of a wealthy Danish merchant, who had been ruined by his excessive hospitality and expenditure, together with the abolition of the slave trade and an Ashantee invasion, which cost him some £10,000 to repel, though he and a friend of his—Mr. Bannerman—inflicted such a defeat on the savages, some twenty miles from Accra, that the field was piled with dead Ashantees, and some of the princesses of the Royal House fell into their hands, becoming the legitimate wives of their captors. Our friend was therefore closely allied to the savage monarch, though he certainly felt no friendly feeling to the race. He had been educated at an expensive school in England, and had visited most of the capitals of Europe.

"But now," he said, with a resigned air of melancholy, "I am but a poor nigger."

Then, with a laugh, he asked us to be seated, as a bevy of damsels, headed by the old lady of the duck-pond mixture, appeared bearing sundry black pots which emitted odours rich and rare.

"It is quite an African breakfast that I can offer you, gentlemen. I fancied you might prefer it; though my kinsman, Mr. Bartels, has sent a hamper for your use, which we can try afterwards."

We preferred the African fare, and with huge appetites set to work. The cooking

was exquisite, though peculiar, and everything was a trifle warm with pepper—the black pot, like the pepper pot of the West Indies, retaining the property of the peppers cooked in it. Oysters and sand-crabs done in palm oil, with balls of foofoo, a kind of hasty pudding made from boiled plantains, was our first dish, and a very delicious one it was; a deep draught of palm wine, cool, creamy, and fresh from the tree that morning, followed this. Then came some young chickens about the size of partridges, plump and tender, stuffed and done whole, in a rich, unctuous mince surrounding them, which turned out to be venison. After that, a nondescript, which appeared to be and tasted like fowl, but when done in palm oil, was much more appetizing; this was iguana, and I could hardly believe that the repulsive-looking lizard I had seen that morning could be so good. Roasted kanku, done up in plantain leaves, was the correct thing with this, and then a soupçon of rum neat.

At length a sucking-pig, roasted and stuffed to perfection, wound up a *déjeuner à la fourchette* exquisite of its kind. To this succeeded some delicious pines, guavas, mangos, and Custard apples; but the queen of all the fruits was the Avocado pear, and this I felt to give me a new appetite and life.

When will this glorious plum be known in England, or can it ever be grown there, even in a hothouse? To taste it, an epicure would be well repaid for a journey to Africa.

Breakfast over, our new friend proposed a walk to his garden, and we gladly assented, feeling much interest in the new existence opened to us. It seemed to transport one so far from the dull, monotonous life of the Cape Coast Castle square, where existence was literally a burden, and our only occupation knocking billiard balls about, drinking beer, or talking scandal. Even of drill we could not have much, for the men were drilled to perfection already; and their number was too few, and the space too limited, for anything but mere gun drill, or the simplest of infantry manœuvres.

Mr. H. was far in advance of his countrymen. He had planted and cultivated vines, from which he expected to realize a good income at some future day. The vines were supported on a trellis-work of bamboos, strongly but neatly made, and shaded from the great heat of the day by large plantain leaves. The fruit was hanging in large half-

ripe clusters, and in great profusion all round.

A large space, too, was planted with young cotton trees; and in the bush about he pointed out to us a number of the same growing, with their pods just bursting, and displaying the snowy fleeces inside them. The most interesting part of the garden was the pepper plantation, however; and our enterprising host told us that, if his example were followed, in a short time the Gold Coast might rival Sumatra in its pepper-producing powers. I think we counted twenty-seven different species of pepper trees, all loaded with fruit. Ginger was another article to which this gentleman had turned his attention, and a quantity of it was spread out drying in the hot sun. Our attendants had followed us with our guns; and quitting the garden now, we struck through a forest-path, where, though in the middle of the day, we were quite shaded from the rays of the sun, which never penetrated those recesses, so dense was the umbrageous canopy overhead.

Toucans and jays of gorgeous colours were flying from bough to bough, and huge vampire bats hung head downwards, enjoying their noontide sleep, from lofty perches, gripping them with their dangerous claws. Presently we heard a strange colloquy in a clump of trees, and, stopping to listen, were in doubt as to what feathered creature could produce sounds so closely resembling the human voice—"Polly, Polly, pretty Polly! Quick march, Polly!" We could hardly believe our senses. Here was a colony of grey parrots. Some errant bird escaped from the Fort had got amongst his fellows, and the woods resounded with their imitations of the learning he had acquired during his captivity, and which he had aired considerably since his escape. These birds were feeding on the fruit of some trees which grow wild, as if planted by a beneficent Creator for their use, and, to the number of some hundreds, were eating and talking incessantly.

As we were watching them, a native huntsman came up, who had been scouting, and he informed us that some hundreds of monkeys were not far off, resting on the large trees that overhung the river; and as this was a sport we were anxious to indulge in, we left the loquacious birds unharmed, and hurried off to make an attack on the beasts Mr. Darwin has pronounced to be our cou-

sins. There was a great commotion and rustling in the tree-tops as the monkeys became aware of our presence. They had been indulging in a siesta close to the river-side, where it expanded into a large, deep pool, on whose placid bosom several canoes were floating. Our host informed us that in the rains these were absolutely necessary to those who wanted to cross the river, and were also useful in fishing, as large, excellent trout were caught during the floods in great abundance by spearing and netting.

The monkeys seemed at first inclined to show fight; but when one dropped dead off the bough he had been sitting on into the pool beneath, their courage began to evaporate, and leaping from bough to bough, a retreat was then commenced; but they were outnumbered, and a fire of musketry opening in their rear drove them back temporarily to the riverside. Here we bagged a couple more; and at length, with the desperation of hopeless terror, they made a descent from the trees, and charging the natives, who gave way at once before them, dreading their bites, they got off—not unscathed, however, for one old grey-bearded fellow was killed by a shot from Coffu Akotoko, principal huntsman to Mr. Bartels. His death seemed to give great satisfaction to our new friend, for he had been the leader of the band, who made great depredations on his plantations.

The monkeys had got off for the day now, and we found ourselves in a lovely valley, beyond which, to all appearance, lay a wide savannah, bounded by a range of low hills, clothed with the thick, dense forest peculiar to Africa. The valley was well cultivated; young palm trees were here and there sprouting up in various stages of forwardness. The never-failing silk-cotton trees towered majestically at intervals, and a couple of enormous baobab trees stood side by side, like twin giants, at the farther end, as though guarding the pass into the plain. They were loaded with fruit, a species of nut which is so hard as to require a heavy axe to split it. Inside, a granulated substance, like yellow corn meal, with black bean-like pods, is found. The meal is excellent, when infused into boiling water, as a remedy against fevers of the more malignant kind, arresting mortification or putrefaction. The properties of the trees themselves are strange enough, as they preserve dead bodies which are placed in them, drying them up until they assume the appearance of mummies.

A path led through the valley by the side of the river, which, being partly in the shade, was followed by us without hurt, though the sun was now very hot. My companion was in front, when, all of a sudden, he sprang back in great alarm.

"Good heavens!" he said—"back! back at once, for your lives; a huge python is going to spring on us!"

Coffu, the huntsman, however, was well accustomed to the woods, and he soon pointed out that the object of our companion's alarm was merely the abandoned skin of the serpent that was lying in the long reeds, which, agitated by a gentle breeze, caused it to appear as though animated and about to spring at us. It measured eighteen feet; and its width showed how very unpleasant a gentleman would have been the "snake who there shed its enamelled skin." As we were wending our way through the cassada, a fine covey of partridges got up; and I killed right and left, as did my companion. Our host was armed with a long Spanish gun, and, in his courtesy, he had allowed us to fire first. His good breeding was now rewarded, for a loud grunting and rustling noise was heard in the cassada shrubs, and a huge boar, a sow, and a bevy of young grunters made off towards the forest.

A bright flash and a loud report, and then down tumbles the boar, shot through the body, whilst the sow turns viciously to bay, her young ones clustering round her. The boar is gasping out his life, with the blood pouring from his huge jaws; but he, too, strives to rise in defence of his brood, and for a moment he stands on his legs, with fierce, angry grunts, flashing eyes, and sharp, cruel tusks bared for the attack. He might have mustered up strength for a rush, but for my putting a bullet between his eyes from a six-shooting revolving rifle, which Mr. Bartels had purchased in Paris during his last trip to the fairy capital, and which he had lent me for this sporting expedition. A couple more shots sealed the fate of the sow, and her brood, scattering through the cassada fields, were routed out and killed by the natives.

The boar was a huge brute, and his tusks would have inflicted a very deadly wound on any one whom he might have attacked. Selecting a couple of young porkers for ourselves, and giving the sow to the natives, the boar and the other young grunters, it

was decided, were to be sent off to the village—part to be reserved for Mr. Bartels, the rest for our dinner; and then we made all haste to where two small red, blue, and white flags hanging from a cluster of palms betokened our mid-day encampment.

Here, to our surprise, we found Mr. Bartels and some Dutch officers awaiting us, and preparations for a very sumptuous repast. Mats were spread, and easy chairs in plenty. An American cooking stove was in full play. Black pots with their savoury contents, cases of beer and Champagne, tins of French preserved meats and vegetables—petit pois, champignons, asperge. A box of real Havannahs was lying open; whilst some flasks with slender necks, bedizened with tinfoil, were cooling in an icing machine.

Our surprise was great at this rencontre, so unexpected and so pleasant. Long years have passed since that merry meeting, but its remembrance can never fade from my mind, nor can the kind hospitality of the generous, courteous gentleman who had so liberally exerted himself for the amusement of almost total strangers; but this was his delight. We were loudly congratulated on our successful day's sport, by both our host and the Dutch officers, who were most courteous, well-bred men. Some of them had lived in Java, and by interest had received early promotion to the Coast, intending some day, as they told us, to return to Java and settle down there.

A glorious country this Java must be, and the ignorance of geography in the official which caused us to lose it must be ever deplored. Climate has always been the bugbear of the English people, and if some half dozen vauriens of titled families, who have been shipped off as black sheep to the colonies, to get them out of sight of duns, debts, and sheriffs' officers, happen to die, their relations at home raise a loud outcry over the untimely death of a fine young man, who perhaps has finished by drinking himself to death, or dying from decay brought on by the excesses which he has gone to; and this is all put down to the fearful climate!

We were hungry, thirsty, and tired; and there seemed here a Paradise, where every want was to be gratified. Our dinner—but how can I recall such pleasant memories without a sigh: appetite was not wanting, and we dined luxuriously that day. I have tried all the boasted restaurants of Paris and Vienna,

and nothing came up to the ortolans or the wild turkey, the luscious kickie, or the palm stew, that stimulated us to fresh exertions.

The wines were exquisite, and the liqueurs we had before tasted seemed to have wonderful power in aiding digestion. Time, however, remorseless in his flight, at length warned us we must move on, and quitting our pleasant resting-place, we spread ourselves out in the plain—Mr. Bartels starting in his hammock for a cleared spot on the opposite hills, where some whitewashed cottages betokened something above a mere native village.

A messenger had been despatched to recall the carriers of the boar, who were ordered to proceed to their master's kroom, and to summon our hammock men.

We were now in a broad savannah, enclosed by low hills, with clumps of trees and low bushes scattered about in it. The plain was literally alive with game. Partridges were driven out of every clump of bushes; a kind of pheasant was occasionally dislodged from the thick cover of some evergreens; pea-fowl in broods were cackling all round; and during our advance across the plain several noble bush turkeys soared up, and were quickly knocked over. At length, when we reached a sort of knoll in the plain, where some dense thickets were growing, we determined, by the advice of Cofu, to let the natives and dogs enter and beat the bushes. In a few minutes some dozen antelopes of different kinds and sizes sprang out, and a general fusillade took place. Five of the pretty creatures were killed; and now, as the sun was casting his last beams through the tall stems of the palm trees on the hills near, we hurried to our new camp.

ME AND MY DOGS.

GRUB.

"GET out!" I said it again and again—half a dozen times, at least—accompanying the words with a stamp of the foot, or a rap of the stick; but the only effect was to drive the little wretch away for about a dozen yards, in a cowering, unpleasant fashion, and then if I looked back, there he was, trotting slowly after me, as if determined not to be shaken off. Bother the dog! I did not want it after me, but there it was, having followed me ever since I started for my morning walk.

I don't know what sort of a dog it was. It might have been anything—spaniel, terrier, cur, mongrel, anything. All that I could compare it to was a dog in difficulties; for a more disreputable, dirty, ragged object it was impossible to picture. One sees dirty dogs and ragged dogs every day of one's life—lame dogs, blind dogs, disreputable looking dogs: in fact, shabby dogs are exceedingly common; but I never in my travels met with anything combining so much misery condensed in so small a compass as upon this occasion.

As a rule, dirty dogs carry their filth with a jaunty air; the lame dogs go sprightly enough on three legs; the tailless cur keeps his head well up; while a dog blind of one eye seems to have his other eye so sharpened that there is no getting the blind side of him. But this dirty, wretched object, which would follow me, seemed the quintessence of everything repulsive and humiliating. He was so limp, so shrinking, so—so—so—well, words are wanting to describe his aspect, so we will say so very so-so. It grew to be quite unpleasant at last; for one encountered friends and acquaintances who must have gone on saying to themselves—"What a beast of a dog Smith has now." To an ordinary man it would not have mattered so much; but to one tender upon dogs it was most painful.

I made no scruple of talking about my dislike to animals canine; so, as a matter of course, would-be witty friends must poke fun at the wretches I generally had hanging about my place—living on me, as it were—till one very funny personage said I was being turned into dog's-meat. Bubbley might have been a portion of Constantinople for its droves of dogs; while now—a very Pariah of the Pariahs—here was a miserable wretch fixing himself upon me in the most ruthless way, heedless of threats, stamps, blows, or projected stones.

"I'll tire him out," I thought; and striking off across Oak Common, I strode away till the flow of perspiration made me slacken speed and glance over my left shoulder. There was my tormentor, trotting along at a respectful distance behind; so, as there was no one in sight, I tried another plan, and rushed down with uplifted stick at the dog, who started aside amongst the golden furze, and allowed me to pass, when he resumed his trot trot behind me as calmly as if nothing was the matter.

"Well, this really is very distressing," I muttered.

And then once more I went on, hoping still to shake off my troublesome follower. But all in vain. I dodged, I doubled, I strode here and there, went over the brook by the stepping-stones in the hope that he would not be able to compass them, and that I should lose him; but he stumbled, and splashed, and swam through, gave himself a shake, and followed again, looking more disreputable than ever.

There was a farmyard to cross, where there existed a gate, and as I closed that, a grim smile came upon my face; for as I looked at the damp straw which hardly allowed the gate to swing above it, I vowed that no living dog could crawl beneath, and giving my unwelcome friend a familiar nod, I passed on; but before the strawyard was crossed, there was a loud rustling noise, and the little wretch had burrowed his way through the straw, coming out all bitty, and covered with outflyers, chaff, and bits of dirt.

It really seemed as if every attempt I made to what the Lincolnshire folk call "get shut of him," made matters worse. So, with determination painted on my face, I strode along at four miles an hour, till I reached my house, when I hurriedly opened the door and closed it after me.

"What's that?" I said, half an hour after, as a dreadfully prolonged howl fell upon my ear.

"A nasty wretch of a dog, sir, as won't go away, and 'ave made the doorstep in a 'orrid mess."

"Drive it away," I said, turning once more to my newspaper.

But Grub would not be driven away—at least, he came back as soon as his driver's back was turned; and he howled dismally on the doorstep, till my landlady came and begged of me to shoot him, poison him, or in some way rid the place of his presence.

To have rid the place of the little wretch's presence I should only have been too glad, but that seemed an impossibility; while at first it seemed quite as impossible to bear the horrible howls, prolonged to a dreadful extent, to which he gave vent.

"It's a sign of death in the house," said Mrs. Sloper, shaking her head and smoothing down her apron, before crossing her hands in a very resigned way upon her band.

"His own, then," I muttered, darkly

glancing at an old double gun standing in the corner, one that I never used.

But, in the hope of improvement, we patiently bore the dismal, hollow howls of the brute through afternoon and long evening, till towards bedtime the noise became so insufferable, that it seemed folly to think of repose. So, as a last resource, we determined upon bribing the little wretch into silence.

Time after time I had opened the door a little way and made blows at him with a stick, all of which he contrived to elude, for he dashed off instantaneously; but only to be back in his place by the time I was seated, and to howl again more dolefully than ever.

Water thrown from an upstairs window only made the steps wet, for the dog crept up into the corner, close to the door, where the porch protected him; and in every movement proved that his had been a long tussle with the world, during which he had learned to slip aside, flinch, elude, and dodge every kind of blow, kick, and missile cast at his wretched little body.

His plan was plain enough: his tactics were evidently to howl me into taking him in; but that I was determined not to do, and only for the sake of getting a sound sleep had I made my way to the larder for a plateful of scraps, and these I cautiously thrust through the chink of the front door, opened but a little way for fear of an invasion. As a matter of course the little animal fled; but the plan was successful, for upon closing the door, a very few minutes elapsed before there came the snuffing, crunching noise of a dog over bones, and I knew that our domestic would the next morning be bewailing the greasy state of the doorstep in which she took so much pride. But present comfort was everything to me, and from the cessation of the howling I concluded the little wretch had gained his point and gone.

But not he. In giving him food I had only increased his attachment for the place; and the very first thing next morning when the door was opened in he rushed, and, in spite of every exertion to keep him out, took possession of a spot under the lounge, and would not come out.

He stayed with me as a matter of course. He grew so dreadfully fond of me that I could not stir without him; and, making a virtue of necessity, I had him washed and combed, and if it had been possible I would

have had him cleaned, dyed, and altered, for every attempt to make him look decent proved to be a complete failure. His was a coat that looked all the dirtier the more it was washed. Combing always made him more ragged; and when he had been touched up, he stood shivering and wretched, as if completely ashamed of himself.

I don't know where he came from, nor whose dog he was; but somehow or another he must have been utterly demoralized in early life, for a greater thief never existed. I could forgive a dog that stole from sheer hunger; but Grub would steal directly after having a good meal, and then come and tell you of it as if moved thereto by repentance. I could see in a moment when he had been doing wrong, for if ever dog showed it in his countenance Grub did. His was the particular look known as hang-dog, and after no end of punishments I gave Grub up as a bad job, sin being in his case undoubtedly innate, so that it was his nature to steal.

He came howling in one day, with a closed eye and the side of his head swelling at a great rate from a blow with a broom handle, inflicted by the village grocer, who had caught him bacon stealing; and I now knew from whence he had obtained about two pounds of the same viand about a week before, when he had coolly brought it into the drawing-room, laid it upon the hearth-rug, and then and there proceeded to devour it, till reminded of his breach of decorum by being "ruddled out" by Mrs. Sloper. The larder door was kept jealously closed, or something was safe to disappear.

Being old-fashioned, common sort of people down our way, we dine at one and tea at five, and then have a snug supper at nine. Tim Connor, the old lieutenant of foot, my neighbour, a half-pay officer of Her Majesty's service, often drops in for a game of chess, a chat, and a tumbler of rale Irish, with two slices of deliciously transparent lemon floating therein. Fine old fellow, keen and sharp-witted as any of his countrymen, and such a one as would have been a general in any service but ours. Poor old Tim would again and again lay bare his sick heart, and talk of his forty years' service and inability to purchase his steps, and then sigh and stir his tumbler of whisky and water, and vow that it would be all the same a hundred years hence.

One of Tim Connor's favourite suppers was cold leg of lamb and a nice cool salad;

and one night, by special invitation, he had come to help devour a delicious little leg of a Southdown lamb. The supper cloth was laid, our game of chess finished just in time, and we had adjourned to the snug little closet that Mrs. Sloper will call the dining-room. There was the white bread on the snowy trencher, the smoking roast potatoes in a bowl, the crisp salad, pickles, tarts on the sideboard, but only an empty dish fronting my seat.

"Where's the lamb, Mrs. S.?" I very naturally exclaimed, when that lady gazed at the table, then at me, and then once more at the empty dish, before lifting her hands and exclaiming—

"Oh, that horrid dog!"

There was no mistake about it. Grub had stolen the choice leg; and the bone, well picked, was found upon the lawn the next morning, while Grub took the thrashing Mrs. Sloper bestowed with the greatest of equanimity, placing his paws over his eyes, while his well-stuffed body seemed but little the worse for the infliction. He certainly was a rather ravenous feeder; but after leaving ordinary food he would go and steal. It must have been genuine kleptomania, for I can find no other reason for his vagaries. As for the leg of lamb, there was not the slightest doubt of his guilt there; for he left his paw mark upon the clean white cloth to show that he had been there.

That was a hearty meal, no doubt; and I rather fancy that Mrs. Sloper's cat joined in and went shares, from her being so sleepy the next morning; but Grub had better have abstained, for Mrs. Sloper never forgave him, any more than she did me for keeping the wretch. But there he was, and there he meant to stay; and he did stay, too. He seemed to be haunted with the idea that he belonged to the place that he did so much to disgrace. If he had possessed the slightest spirit he would never have put up with the kicks, blows, and downright thrashings he received; but plenty to eat and drink and a warm bed seemed to make up to him for every other deprivation, and Grub stayed on.

I christened him Grub on account of his looks, for do what you would he was always a perfect disgrace. The cleaning process I have before alluded to, and its inefficacy; while as to the smart brass collar I purchased for him, and secured with a little padlock round his neck, he looked so out

of place in it—so much like a pig in a pearl necklace—that I laughed at him heartily, while from that moment, almost without cessation—until out of pity I took it off—Grub spent his time in trying to thrust the brass ornament over his ears. As to the dog-kennel in the yard, which I had newly whitewashed inside and green painted out, a sort of dread or shame always kept him out of it, and when fastened to the ring he would walk to the full extent of his chain and curl up on the cold stones; while, when I regularly pushed him in and kept him there, he howled so fearfully that I fled, and sent the gardener to let him loose.

Grub stayed with me for quite a year, when his kleptomania grew so bad that I was determined that he should be kept chained up; so the brass collar was once more relentlessly locked round his neck, the chain attached, and so that he should grow used to the kennel I had him thrust in, and a piece of old wire guard twisted temporarily in front, turning it into a prison; and then began the most doleful, discordant yelling and barking I had ever heard issue from the throat of mortal dog. He howled that day and all that night—howled hideously, so that I was glad to rise at six the next morning, take a hammer and take off the wire, and then unlock the collar, and set the little wretch at liberty. It was enough to make any man kick him; and as I had on only Berlin wool worked slippers, I did make an effort; but before it could take effect Grub was out of reach, darting away as if half mad.

I had not wanted to imprison him but for his thievish propensities, and my heart smote me as I noticed his utter horror of chains and solitary confinement. I returned in-doors cross and put out; for the place was in that pleasant state of tea-leaves, dust, and confusion common to downstairs rooms before eight in the morning. And then I began to think over what would be best to be done with Grub, when sitting down in an easy chair, in consequence of my distracted night, I fell asleep and dreamed that the dog had run away never to return, and awoke to find it was a dream.

I knew it is the custom to say, "Lo, it was a dream;" but I have omitted the expression here, for this was a dream that turned out to be prophetic, and its fulfilment immediate. There was no mistake about it. Grub came suddenly, I never

knew from whence, and so he departed. The last I saw of him was his tail, as he disappeared round the corner of the house: the night in the kennel had done what ill-treatment would never have effected. Horror-stricken, he had fled as for his life, and so far he has never returned; while, when Mrs. Sloper thoroughly realized the fact—which it took quite ten days to make clear to her sceptical mind—she raised her hands, and exclaimed—

"That's a mussy!"

THE CARTRIDGE PAPERS.

BY AN OLD SOLDIER.

IN BARRACKS.

I WAS leaning over the vessel's side, catching glimpses of the festivities at Mirzapore, and wishing to be nearer, quite forgetting that "distance lends enchantment to the view," when my cap fell off, and went floating down the stream. I jumped into the boat alongside to regain my cap, which I soon fished out, and, on looking up, found the boat was adrift. I was not alone, however; three of my companions were with me. They had cast off the boat-rope, and we had swung clear and were going down the stream.

Having more nautical skill than any of the rest, I immediately constituted myself pilot, and putting the helm to starboard, brought the boat to the bank, fouling a lot of shore boats, into one of which we jumped, leaving our own to drift. We had to cross several others before we could land; and in one of these the crew were sitting under the half-deck, eating their rice out of a tray; the half-deck was floored with thin bamboos, placed side by side, strong enough to bear their naked feet; but I, in jumping from one boat to another, set my foot right through into the centre of the tray. It was perhaps lucky for me that the natives use their fingers instead of knives, or they might have carved the joint so unceremoniously placed in the dish; as it was, I withdrew my leg as quickly as I could, and made for the shore, where we sat down and laughed heartily. We then mounted the high river bank, and took a view all round, and then went inland.

All the nautching was over, at least in the streets; but they were well lit up, and in several places natives (Brahmins, I suppose) were expounding the law, or telling stories to a numerous, and evidently an admiring

audience, the majority of whom had strings of lotus flowers round their necks, and very little other clothing.

The sweetmeat shops were like the London gin-shops on a holiday, the great centres of attraction; but sweets soon pall on the taste; and I was thinking that our excursion would not, after all, be worth the trouble taken, when we came suddenly on a distillery, and our hearts were gladdened.

It was a little shed with an enclosure at the back, in one corner of which were three large earthenware vessels, with fire underneath them; and earthen pipes projecting from their tops, covered with wet mud. I very strictly scrutinized this apparatus, so mysterious from its very simplicity, and then tasted the produce; it was to my palate very nasty warm, and not much better cold. We tasted it several times both ways; then Roche and Savage, who had been twelve months longer than we in the country, began to speechify to the natives in the vernacular; Savage, who was the best spokesman, being helped out when at a loss by Roche with a bit of Irish; and, after some difficulties, the conversation ended in the production of something superior in bottles, for which we paid about three times the regular price; and we were congratulating ourselves on our good fortune (?), when in marched a sergeant, corporal, and three privates, to take us into custody.

Now, the whole five of these were old soldiers, so called from having been twelve months longer in the country than myself—and, with the generality of my shipmates, gave themselves airs in consequence of this seniority; but I and the other Spanish Legionists never lost an opportunity of retaliating. We four delinquents had been playing the Nabob with the native loafers at the distillery. Great, then, was our indignation when those five men came in, and stated to the company at large their intention to take us back prisoners. They were only ordinary men like ourselves, their rank as sergeant and corporal only being given to them for the voyage up.

I stepped into the centre of the yard, and challenged them to lay down their arms—for they were all armed with broomsticks, which made the indignity all the greater; but after some argument, in which they said they had a whole regiment of Sepoys at their call if required, it ended in a compromise; all agreeing to make the most of our time

until nine o'clock, when we were to go home captives. And so each party honourably performed their part of the agreement, and after drinking a good quantity of liquor—we had attained the luxury of having it boiled with sugar and spices—we made our way towards the river some time before midnight.

Our return on board caused a great sensation. Our commanding officer had gone to bed in the flat, but there were four young artillery officers on board, who, with the officers of the steamboat and flat, were all up and formed a sort of deputation, receiving us, as far as the sailors went, with some mock formality. They evidently expected some fun, and were not disappointed, for our excuses were made and our stories told with the usual amount of absurd exaggeration, and made as much at the expense of the escort as possible. I described myself as having been carried away by the boat, very much against my will; but our sentence had been pronounced before the captain went to bed, and it was imprisonment until further orders. This was anything but a punishment—we were having the same freedom as the others on board, but being exempt from all work. On board the flat were sixty lacs of rupees. On the trap-door securing this a sentry was posted day and night. This slight duty we did not now do; and so, as is always the case in the army, our wrong-doing brought extra work on our comrades.

It was very slow work, travelling up the Ganges—always anchoring at dusk, and on several occasions being aground the greater part of the day, getting anchors out and dragging the vessel over the shoals by main strength of windlass. We were more than three weeks before we arrived at Allahabad, farther up than which the boats did not go. Here I was released from confinement, our captain giving me some very good advice, in consequence, as he said, of the good account he had received from Captain Burnett.

After a halt of some days here, we started for Cawnpore, one hundred and twenty miles. It was a curious march for us forty-one men. Six elephants had been sent to help us along the road, and as small ponies were to be bought at from five to seven rupees each, seventeen had been purchased by the men, so that any one meeting us on the road, especially as nearly all our movements were made in the dark, would have been

puzzled to tell whether we were infantry, cavalry, or rabble.

It was, however, very pleasant, starting in the cool of the evening, and after some six or seven miles resting for the night in some favourable spot—generally a Mohammedan burial-ground—and then on again in the early morn to where our tents were pitched in some pleasant place, and where we generally arrived before the sun was too powerful. Eight marches like this brought us to the cross-roads, some small distance from Cawn-pore, where a huge finger-post pointed to Allahabad in one direction and to Cabul in the other.

Here we were met by a sergeant of the Horse Artillery; and all were dismounted, and the ponies given over for the time to the cook boys and camp followers, and we marched into cantonments like soldiers. I was at first surprised at the barn-like appearance of the barracks, so different to the fine buildings at Dumdum; but they were more comfortable inside, being loftier. Each building was three hundred feet in length, the centre twenty-four feet in width, with a verandah on each side, twelve feet wide; all under a roof of great height, covered with thatch for coolness; a brick floor, from which to the ridge was thirty feet. In the outer wall there were doors at intervals of nine feet, and in the main walls there were arched openings to correspond; so that there was a perfect draught right across the building from nearly a score of doors on each side. At every arched opening were placed two cots, slightly encroaching towards the opening, from which they might get the air from the outside.

Each barrack, as thus described, would contain ninety men; but when we went into barracks many of the arches were bare, large draughts of both men and horses having been sent up the country, to aid in reforming the troop destroyed to a man in the Khyber Pass. Of the fifty beds in the barracks at that time, some were luxurious, having counterpanes and frilled pillows; some of the boxes at their feet were of beautiful polished dark wood, with massive brass bands and clamps, and some of more moderate pretensions, according to the tastes and habits of the owners. The beds were always made, differing in this from some of the Queen's regiments, who had them bundled up during the day, in accordance with the barrack-room regulations at home. On our arrival many of the piers be-

tween the archways were bare; but the coming of our draught soon altered this, and in a few days we had settled down with regular drills and riding lessons, and I began soldiering in earnest for the first time. The riding school was very large, walled, but without a roof, differing in that respect from the dragoon riding-school close by. The riding master and the rough riders were very rough indeed; and the lessons were given in a very careless, not to say slovenly, manner; and yet I believe the best horsemen in the world were to be found at that time in the Bengal Horse Artillery. The horses and not the teachers were the cause of this; or to speak more correctly, the horses were the teachers.

We were paraded long before daylight, and marched to the stables, where our horses were ready saddled and bridled, held by the native grooms. We were halted in front of them; and then arose in the darkness a babel of sounds, each groom bawling out in his best English the name of the man who had been told off by the stable orderly to ride the horse he held.

When all were mounted, we filed off towards the riding-school, before coming near which frequently the first lesson of the novice began. I, who considered myself a good horseman, had not quite so firm a seat the first few mornings as I, in my confidence, supposed I should have.

In the dark it was impossible to tell what sort of an animal was beneath you; he might be as gentle as a lamb—a very few of that sort were amongst one hundred and sixty-nine composing the troop—or he might be a fierce man-eater, as many were, who would throw you if he could, and then attack you like a tiger. The half-mile ride to the school before dawn was to some more than the lesson they got there. Some got thrown, and went to hospital; some were unseated, many unsettled in their seats. But the darkness gave all a chance; so that if the recruit had pluck he became a good rider and donned his spurs, and if not he was sent to the foot artillery. Cavalry regiments have no such way as that of getting rid of their bad horsemen.

In August came the usual annual visitor—the cholera—taking six of our men, all old hands, two of whom were non-commissioned officers. I have of late years read many statements regarding the sanitary condition of soldiers' barracks in India, most of which were made by persons who had but

few opportunities of knowing anything about the subject. Having had as favourable opportunities for judging as most persons, I can truthfully state that at that time, at Cawnpore, so far as regarded the barracks in which we lived and the soldiers' lines generally, every care was taken to ensure cleanliness in the strictest sense of the word. Once a week each barrack was literally flooded with water, and twice a day they were all thoroughly swept.

Our soldiering in India was a pleasant life at that time. If the orders said a field-day for the morrow, all were glad. Your clothes and accoutrements were laid ready at your bedside the evening before by the servant who made your bed, pipe-clayed your belts, &c., and you had only to dress when roused up in the morning, and were paraded by lanthorn light and marched to the stables, where the horses were ready harnessed, and you rode over to the gun-shed, where the gun Lascars had the guns ready, and the six horses were backed into position, and the traces hooked on. In less than a minute you were in progress, and on your arrival at the ground it would be daylight, and your pleasure commenced, with just enough danger to give it a zest.

If your horse kicked over the trace and fell, you still had to stick on his back, unless ordered otherwise. The other five horses might be fighting, kicking, and roaring; but woe to you if you showed any signs of fear: you would constantly be hearing of it from your comrades in the barrack-room for a week after.

When the field-day was over we rode back to the gun-sheds, disengaged, and then to the stables, where the men were in waiting to groom the horses. After superintending this operation a few minutes, we were marched back to the barrack, where the cooks had the breakfast ready; and your labour for the day was over—roll call in barracks of an afternoon always following the field-day mornings.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE proximity of Isaac's ever-watchful ears prevented my putting to Robert the question I longed to ask him; but directly we reached home, I said—

"Well, old fellow, I hope you have made your peace with the heiress?"

"No such thing," was his reply, delivered in a most dolorous tone.

"How is that?" I asked.

"It is all over with me in that quarter."

"How so? What stupidity have you been guilty of this time?"

"Nothing at all."

"Still, there must be some cause for your despondency. You seemed quite on good terms with her this evening."

"Seemed!"

"Just so; one can only judge by appearances. You did not look as if you had been quarrelling, at all events."

"Worse than that."

"What could be worse?"

"To be so madly in love with a woman as to allow her to persuade me to propose for another."

"Bob, only I know you don't drink, I would say you were intoxicated."

"I wish that was all. I seriously think I am out of my mind."

"Nonsense! But how have you managed to get yourself into such an unheard-of scrape?"

"You shall hear it all, if you'll only have patience."

"Hear what?" inquired my wife, who had gone up to the nursery, and had just returned.

"That you have a fool for a brother," said Robert, bitterly.

"Why, what have you done?"

"Don't look at a fellow like that, Emma; but listen quietly, and hear me out. I want your opinion, as well as Tom's. For my part, I think the best thing I can do will be to go and hang, drown, or shoot myself."

"That makes three things," I said, cheerfully; for I had gathered a crumb of comfort from the serio-comic expression of his features, and the tone of his voice.

"Joke away! I believe if I were dead you couldn't stop it."

"All right, Bob," I replied, "go on with your story, and when we have heard it, we'll think of what's best to be done. How was it you went out walking with Miss Middleton on the lawn?"

"While you were performing, I was mooning about, horribly bored by three girls in yellow, and feeling miserable enough, when I happened to look over towards the place where she was sitting."

"Where who was sitting?" inquired my wife, who had evidently not been listening to her brother.

"She," he replied, emphasizing the personal pronoun, to intimate that there was but one individual in all the world to whom by any possibility it could refer.

"Well?" I said, interrogatively, in order to encourage him, for I saw that he was put out.

"Well, our eyes met, and to my surprise she smiled, and bowed slightly; but that was enough for me—I left the three yellow girls to take care of themselves, and made my way over to her. We shook hands, and she remarked that the room was very warm. Emboldened by her gracious manner, I asked her if she would like to take a turn outside. She said she would; whereupon I offered my arm, which she took, and after a severe struggle with the crowd I managed to get her safely into the hall. There I laid hold of somebody's shawl, wrapped her up in it, and got her out into the garden."

Overpowered by the recollection of his achievement, or by his emotions, Bob stopped in his narration, and I once more said "Well?" to remind him that we were listening.

He continued—

"When we got outside, she let go my arm, and we walked up and down for some time without speaking. Then we talked about the weather and the party, and at last she said—

"Is not Miss St. Clair a nice girl?"

"Oh, yes, of course," I said; "I dare say she is—I really don't know."

"Well, for my part, I like her very much, Mr. M'Lachlan, and think she is an uncommonly nice, pleasant girl—and let me whisper a secret—she is very fond of you, and would make you a suitable wife, much more so than a person nearly old enough to be your mother."

"Oh, Miss Middleton!"

"Stop, look at Mr. Woodward and his wife, and take warning in time."

"But, Miss Middleton, there is, there can be, no possible similarity between the two cases."

"Excuse me, there is. Will you take my advice?"

"I will, if—"

"No ifs; will you take my advice? I am many years older than you are, and have seen more of the world, although you are a

man and an officer—will you unreservedly take my advice, whether it suits your present temperament or not?"

"I will."

"Very well, before you go home to-night, propose for Louisa St. Clair. As I have said before, she is a nice girl, very fond of you, and will make you a capital wife."

"Very well, Miss Middleton," I said, after a good deal of talking to, "I will do your bidding."

"Oh, Robert!" exclaimed my wife, when we had heard him thus far—"I am so sorry."

"Let us hear all about it, Bob," I said. "There may be some loophole of escape even yet, Emma. Perhaps his heart failed him, or he had not the opportunity."

"I did it," sighed he; "not five minutes before you beckoned to me that you were going home."

"And did she accept you?" asked his sister.

"Conditionally," he replied. "I told her I asked her by Miss Middleton's advice, and at her particular request; and she looked very angry, and said she wished Miss Middleton would mind her own business. And when I pressed her for an answer, she said—'When you ask me of your own accord, Mr. M'Lachlan, I will answer you—not before.'"

"Courage, old boy," I exclaimed, "you are saved! You have redeemed your promise, and not compromised yourself. There is no harm done, after all."

"Louisa is a nice enough girl," said my wife; "but, Robert, you can do better if you persevere quietly, and you have not enough to keep a wife on in the army."

"No," he replied; "but the worst of it is, I have received orders to report progress to-morrow, and I must obey; and I know she won't let me off."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE morning following the affair at the vicarage, I was surprised to receive a visit from my friend the rector before I was up.

"I wish to goodness you'd step over to my place," he said, "and see what's the matter with her—she has led me a life all night."

"Dear me!" I exclaimed, shocked by his manner; "what is the matter now?"

"That's just what I want you to tell me,"

he replied; "for my part, I believe she's gone clean mad this time, and no mistake."

"I'll go over as soon as I am dressed, and see what can be done."

"You won't be long?"

"No," I replied—"not many minutes."

I finished my toilet as quickly as possible, and on reaching the breakfast-room, found everything ready, and my wife waiting for me.

"Don't go till you've had your breakfast, Tom."

"I can't wait, my dear," I replied; "never mind me, I'll be back directly."

"You don't know how long you may be kept, Tom; and, besides, I fancy from what the rector says that Mrs. Woodward is not very bad—a little hysterical again, and nothing more—except, perhaps, her temper."

"Poor soul!" I said; "she has no bed of roses to lie on, I'm afraid."

"Very likely not, Tom; but do have your breakfast while it is hot and comfortable."

I yielded to my wife's entreaties and the promptings of my own appetite, and sat down.

"A few minutes," I reasoned, to quiet my conscience, "can't make much difference one way or the other."

Before we had half finished our repast, however, a violent ringing was heard at the front door, and, Jane not responding on the instant, was repeated again and again—or, rather, was continued without intermission—until I, losing patience, hastened out to see what was the matter, and who it was was making such a disturbance.

It was Charles back again. He was without his hat.

"Do come," he cried, seizing me by the arm. "She has certainly gone stark mad."

I hurried off with him, just as I was, in slippers and dressing gown: it was no great distance from my house to the rectory.

"This way," exclaimed Charles, when he had reached his house—"this way," and led me into the dining-room, where I saw his wife, held down in an arm-chair by Margery M'Anvil and the coachman. The poor woman was labouring under a severe hysterical paroxysm or fit, and was gnashing her teeth and grimacing in the most horrible manner. Of course, she was utterly unconscious.

"How long has she been in this state?" I asked.

"Since before the master went for you

the first time, doctor," explained the female servant; "but it's worse and worse she's getting every minute."

"You must get her upstairs and put her into bed, Margery. I will then give her something to send her to sleep, and she will be all right when she wakes up again."

"I wish to goodness she never would," muttered her husband in an under-tone; but I heard him, and I feared the servants did as well.

I repeated my orders to have Mrs. Woodward conveyed to her room, which was done.

"Now, Margery," I said, addressing the woman servant, "you must remain with your mistress until I come back."

I hurried home to prepare a sedative.

"Is she very bad, Tom?" asked my wife.

"No; very hysterical, that's all."

"Do you think I ought to go to her, Tom?"

"No, my dear, by no means; she will be better left by herself for the present."

And I hurried away to compound the necessary medicine, a process which did not detain me long. I then went back to the rectory.

I found my patient in much the same state as when I had left her; if anything, she was rather less agitated.

"Do you know what has brought on this attack?" I thoughtlessly asked the servant.

"I do that," replied the woman; "she and the master has had a row about Miss Middleton."

"Hush—hush! woman," I exclaimed; "you don't know what you are talking about."

"Ah, but I do though, doctor—well."

"Hush!" I repeated, in a more authoritative manner; and Margery held her peace.

"Come, Mrs. Woodward," I then said, taking the patient by the hand, and at the same time offering the draught, which I had poured into a tea-cup; "drink this—it will do you good."

But the poor woman took not the slightest notice of me or of my request.

Perceiving that she was still completely under the influence of the attack, I placed the cup to her lips with but faint hopes that I could get its contents into her mouth; but to my surprise she drank them at once, and the opiate shortly beginning to take effect, her gesticulations gradually subsided, her

features resumed by degrees their usual placid—not to say apathetic—expression, and she slept.

"Do not let her be disturbed," I said to the servant, "until she wakes of her own accord. When she does, she will probably be quite well; but if not, give her this," placing a similar draught to that I had just administered on the table as I spoke.

"It would be a mercy, doctor, if you could give her something so that she might sleep on, and never wake no more."

"How dare you say such a thing?" I exclaimed, angrily. "You don't know what you are saying, or I would have you punished for it."

"I meant no harm, sir—begging your pardon."

"Very well; you must sit here by your mistress, and watch her until she wakes up of her own accord, which she probably will in an hour or two."

"I'm leaving to-day," observed the woman, sullenly, "and can't be sittin' here, when I've got ever so much to do for myself."

"Leaving, are you? Where are you going to now?"

"To Americay."

"Not to-day, surely!" I exclaimed, rather surprised; for she was about the last person I should have suspected of a design to emigrate.

"Yes, this very day. We're goin' in to Pennyletter this afternoon, and from that to Liverpool, across the say."

"Dear me! Is this a sudden thought of yours, Margery?"

"No, sir, it isn't. I've been thinkin' about it ever since last July; for this is no place for a good Catholic to live in."

"What! when you are having a grand chapel built, and are to have a priest of your own living in the town?"

"No, not for all that. I'm goin'; the money is paid, and go we must."

"And who are we, Margery?"

"Meself and Annie Lavery, and Tommy Tiverton, and lots more."

"But Tiverton isn't a Catholic—what's he going for?"

"Because he and his brother Tim had a fall out about the farm when the old man died, and Tim has bought him off, and so he's goin'; and he wants to marry Annie, too, but dursn't here, unless she'd turn, which she won't."

"Well, I wish you luck, Margery; but

you'll stay here till I speak to the master—does he know you are going away?"

"He does; they're goin' to have a girl up from Dublin, I'm told; and I thought she'd have been here by this time."

"Oh, how long can you stay here?"

"I don't mind a couple of hours or so."

I found Charley at his desk in the study; he was pen in hand, and had evidently been busily engaged in writing.

"Well?" he asked, without looking up, when I entered the room.

"She has gone quietly off to sleep," I said, "and will wake up all right in an hour or two. Cheer up, man. I'm going to Cork-oney, presently. Come with me—the drive will do you good."

"No, I must go to Ardmore."

"To Ardmore!" I exclaimed—"what on earth are you going to do there?"

"Knock another nail into my coffin, perhaps," he answered.

"But, Charles—"

"Stop! you need not try to dissuade me, for my mind is made up, and I shall go—no matter what the consequences may be."

"But, Charles—"

"You may as well let me alone—I shall go. I told her so, and that's what set her off."

"Who are you talking about?"

"Her—that madwoman upstairs," he exclaimed, in a loud voice.

"Hush! Charles, or I shall begin to think it is really you who have lost your senses."

"So I have—have I not told you so? I'm sure I don't know one bit what I said and did last night; but this I do know, that I vexed her, and must beg her pardon."

"Whose pardon? who are you talking about now? You had better not go near your wife yet awhile."

"Confound her!" he exclaimed, "I was not alluding to her—you know that very well, but to a certain person it would be sacrilege to name in the same breath."

"Well, but—"

"Don't interrupt me. I dare say you saw me speaking to her last night."

"Do you mean Miss—"

"Of course," he exclaimed, hastily interrupting me; "we drifted into talk of old times."

"Quite natural. But will you take a friend's advice, Charley?"

"Not if I don't like it."

"Do not go to Ardmore. What possible

good can it do you? You are married, and," I continued—stretching a point, I must admit—"I have reason to believe that Miss Middleton has formed an attachment."

"Unsay that!" he shrieked, jumping up from his seat, and, rushing at me, he endeavoured to seize me by the throat; but I was twice as strong as he was, and easily kept him at arm's length—"Unsay that lie!" he repeated, while his eyes flashed, and his mouth foamed with passion; "unsay it; a cruel, wicked, gratuitous, shameful lie!—unsay it, or I'll murder you!"

"Charles, Charles!" I remonstrated, as I pushed him backwards towards the sofa, upon which I compelled him to sit, and where I held him by placing my hands upon his shoulders—"Charles, have pity on yourself and your own character. Be calm."

"Be calm!" he repeated. "Calm! yes, I will be calm—come, let me go," he exclaimed, suddenly making a violent effort to free himself from my grasp.

"Charles," I said, gradually relaxing my hold upon him, as soon as he had desisted from his attempts to shake me off, "I will let you go—I only acted in self-defence—if you will promise me not to go to Ardmore."

"Very well," he replied.

I released him, and he threw himself back upon the sofa, in a complete state of prostration.

"I am mad, don't you think I am?"

"Not at all. You have a violent, ungovernable temper, and you give way to it, that is all. If I did not curb my passions, I should be as bad as you are at times."

"Ah, you can talk—you have fallen on your feet."

"What good do you get by making bad worse?"

"Go on with your preaching."

"No, my friend, I leave that to you, I only advise."

"Confound your advice!"

"Very well; but remember your promise not to go to Ardmore."

"I am not likely to forget it; but I must write to her."

"And make a greater fool of yourself, if that were possible, than you are already."

"I don't think I could."

"For once I agree with you, Charley, thoroughly."

"I must write."

This was said in a less decided manner,

and I hoped that his determination was giving way; but I incautiously said—

"You must not, Charley, it will be too absurd."

"Do you mean to insist upon that lie you told me?"

"Charles," I exclaimed, loudly, "I will not permit you to speak to me in such a manner. I could excuse your using such expressions in the heat of passion, but you are calm now. You must not repeat it."

"I beg your pardon," he replied, feebly, and shrinking away from me, for I had approached him as I spoke—"you must excuse me, Tom," he continued, "I feel that I am not in my right mind."

"Yes you are; but, as I said before, you have let your villainous temper get the better of you, and you will rue it some day, if you do not mind what you are about."

He appeared thoroughly subdued, and said, still more feebly than before—

"I beg your pardon, Tom; I am very sorry."

"That's right," I replied; "you must neither go nor write to Ardmore."

"I suppose I must obey the orders of my medical adviser."

"Exactly," I replied, smiling and holding out my hand; "now you are yourself, old fellow. But you are really just like a spoiled child, and require checking with a high hand."

He sighed.

"If I am not mad, I soon shall be."

"Not you," I answered, cheerfully, "you will soon be yourself again; but guard against your temper."

"I can't help it."

Fearing to irritate him again, I said—

"Well, good-bye for the present. I will go upstairs again, and see my patient, then I am going to Corkoney. Will you come with me, the drive will do you good?"

"No."

"Why not?"

I thought if I only could get him away until he had quite cooled down it would be better, and keep him out of reach of temptation.

"I have business; and besides, I prefer being alone."

On returning to the bed-room, I found my patient sleeping calmly, and Margery M'Anvil watching by her side, as I had desired.

"Has she stirred?" I asked, in an undertone.

"Once or twice, a little, doctor; but she hasn't woke, not to say woke, entirely. How long, doctor darling, am I to kape sitting here, and me with a deal to do, for the car's going to Pennyletter at four?"

"Some one must stay with Mrs. Woodward, Margery; it is quite impossible she can be left alone."

"Sure, I can get Maggie Campbell to stay with her."

"Very well, that will do. If you go for her now, I will wait here until you come back."

"Thank you, doctor—thank you, sir. I won't be a minnit," and the woman hurriedly left the room.

In about ten minutes she returned with the person of whom she had spoken, as bigoted a Catholic as herself, and not a native of the district, but a Southerner, who had married one of the Dumfermaghalee Campbells whilst he was in the army, and after his death had settled herself down in the village, where she supported herself by knitting stockings and field labour. She was also a capital nurse, and I had more than once had occasion to speak highly of her abilities in that capacity.

"I want you to sit with Mrs. Woodward until she wakes up, and if she is not quiet and sensible then, you must give her this draught. Do you understand?"

"Ah, to be sure I do. An' she wakes up quiet an' sensible, I'm to give her the dhrop av physic in the weesky bottleen there."

"No; good gracious!—quite the contrary. She is not to have it unless she should be excited."

"That's true, yer honner; she's not to have it unless she's contrairy."

"Just so; you understand now, I hope?"

"To be sure I do, doctor dear. Shure, it's me that'll mind all ye say; for, och! but ye was the good man to me poor Billy, that's did an' gone."

"Very well. I will look in again, by and by," I said.

Then turning to my old servant, I said to her—

"Well, Margery, I will wish you good-bye, and good luck, as I dare say you will have left before I come in again."

"Good bye, sir, and thank you."

I thought I might as well look into the study before I left the house, and see how

the rector was. I found him busily writing.

"Will you come with me?" I asked.

"I will," he replied; "wait two minutes, will you?"

I waited, and my friend went on writing. In a few minutes he finished his letter, pressed it on his blotting-pad, folded it, put it in an envelope, sealed and directed it.

"To the bishop," he said.

"What about?" I asked.

"I am going to give up this place, and have written to him to say so."

"Again?"

"Yes, and no mistake this time."

"Let me see the letter."

Charles handed it to me across the table. I deliberately tore it into fragments, which I tossed into his waste paper basket.

He looked at me for a moment, in mute astonishment, and then exclaimed, in an angry voice—

"What the dickens did you do that for? One would suppose I was a lunatic, or a baby!"

"You are neither, my dear fellow," I replied, "only inconsiderately hasty. It is well you have a friend beside you at times."

He sighed.

"Perhaps it is."

"Certain," I replied. "Are you ready now?"

"Yes. Shall I order my car, or will you take yours?"

"I'll take mine."

"No—stop. My horse hasn't been out these two days."

"All right."

Charles rang the bell; but after waiting a couple of minutes, and finding that it remained unanswered, he went out to the yard to look for his man, and I followed him.

Joe was not long yoking up; and when we had taken our seats, I told him to drive to my house first, that my wife might know where I had gone.

My patient at Corkoney was in a very bad state, and I had to remain much longer than I anticipated; so that it was nearly five o'clock before we got back.

"I am so sorry, Tom," was the salutation of my wife, as I entered the house, after vainly inviting the rector to come in and dine with us.

"Why, my dear?" I asked.

"Because there was a message came soon after you were gone."

"Where to?"

"Ballymahooly—to see one of the Megarrys."

"Who gave the line, Twaddell?"

"No, Van Poots."

"Oh! he wouldn't give a ticket unless it was something wanted attending to. I must go at once. I shall ride."

My mare was a good roadster, and I put her to her speed the greater part of the way, going and returning; and was once more at home by a quarter to seven.

Isaac, my man, was waiting for me before the house, with such a serious expression on his usually stolid countenance that I immediately concluded something very wrong had taken place during my absence, and called out to him to know if anything had happened to my wife or children.

"They're all right," he replied; "it's Mrs. Woodward, sir—she's gone!"

"Poor soul—dead! Well, to be sure!"

"No, sir," interrupted Isaac, "not gone dead, sir; gone right away, nobody knows where. The rector and Joe, and half the town, are out looking for her since five o'clock."

I waited to hear no more, but hurried into the house.

I saw by my wife's face that she had heard the news, even before she spoke.

"Is it not terrible, Tom? I am afraid she has made away with herself!"

"How did you hear it, dear?"

"From Mr. Woodward himself; he was in here about an hour ago to ask if I had seen her. He says he has searched everywhere, and can find no trace of her whatever."

"I will go round to the rectory, Emma, and inquire if there have been any tidings of her; she may not have gone far."

"I hope not, Tom."

"Poor thing! But where is Bob, my dear? Has he come in?"

"Yes; he has been in some time, and he has gone round the Point, to see if there is any sign of her on the north shore."

"Well, I'll go and meet him. Did he tell you how he got on at Ardmores?"

"No; he said he would wait until you came home."

"I'll go and meet him, dear; and will call in at the rectory on my way."

None of the searchers, I found, had returned; in fact, there was no one in the house except the woman Campbell.

"How did this happen?" was the question I put to her.

"Sorra one av me knows," she replied, coolly. "Shure, it's aslape I wint; and whin I woke, niver a soight av her was to be seen at all, at all."

"Why did you go to sleep, when I told you so particularly that you were to watch her carefully?"

"Shure, thin, it was Margery's fault ontirely. Sorra lie I'm tellin' ye."

"When did she—Margery, I mean—go away?"

"It was half after three."

"Do you mean to tell me that Mrs. Woodward slept till then?"

"I dunno; but I'm thinkin' she wasn't aslape at all, but foxin'!"

"What do you mean?"

"Purtindin', to be sure."

"Ah!"—that was possible, too—"well, how came you to go to sleep yourself?"

"Shure, it was Margery's doin' ontirely."

"How so?"

"Ah! then, didn't she make me dhrink the weeshy dhrop av whisky-punch ye lift in the bottleen?"

"I left whisky-punch!"

"The draff ye called it; an' bedad it got into me head, so it did, an' I wint off to slape, clane an' quiet, an' whin I woke the mistress was gone. So, bedad! I toltid the mather, an' he sint out to luck for her."

I went out, and met Charles at the rectory gate.

"Here's a nice kettle of fish this time!" he exclaimed; "that confounded Maggie went to sleep, it seems, and she escaped."

"It is strange. What do you think can have become of her?" I asked.

"I'm sure I don't know. She threatened this morning to drown herself, and I said she might for all I cared."

"You did!"

"I did; but I'm afraid there's no such luck in store for me."

Utterly disgusted, I walked away, without speaking another word; and instead of going to seek Robert, I directed my steps towards the police barracks and communicated my suspicions to the sergeant in charge, a fine soldierly-looking fellow, and a very intelligent officer.

He promised to send out some of his men at once, with instructions to search in every direction; and upon my expressing a belief that she might possibly have gone

to Pennyletter with, or after, Margery and party, he at once despatched a man to that town, with instructions to seek out the intending emigrants, and ascertain if they had seen or heard anything of the fugitive.

"I wonder if the poor soul has gone back to her sister?"

"No, Tom, I'm sure she has not; for it is not long since she told me that nothing would ever induce her to do so."

"Well, well, we must hope for the best. The sergeant has sent the men out in every direction; perhaps they will find, or at least discover some trace of her."

But, no; days and weeks elapsed without in any way clearing up, or even throwing the faintest light upon the mystery; and it was not for three months that a solution was arrived at—and then?

TABLE TALK.

A CONSTANT READER—may his name be legion!—writes us something about the railways, and says:—The calls of a large family necessitate such economy, that on the short local lines of the Great Eastern Railway I always travel third-class. Now, I do not write to complain to you that we are pestered by itinerant instrumentalists whose music we do not want, though I do think it a nuisance that three times in one day I should have a greasy cap thrust into my face for coppers, and the thruster give me a very offensive look—perhaps a satirical remark upon my being hard-up—because I decline to pay him for singing (?) a few verses of a music-hall song of the lowest type;—I do not, I say, write to complain of this, for it is evidently settling into an institution on the great line. What I wish is, to suggest that if the company insist upon our being played into and out of London, they should take the matter in their own hands; try and prevail upon the Christy—I beg pardon, the Moore and Burgess—Minstrels to rescind their hard edict not to perform out of London, and spread them over the carriages of the various trains. Or, stay. We have had enough as it is of the black face and banjo, so here is a novelty. Let some of the company's officials be sent to Saffron-hill to engage a few fine, handsome Italians—gentlemen who can, as the fair domestic said in *Punch*, play with expression—and settling one of these smiling brigands in each car-

riage, let him grind his organ all day long. A mere trifle, a halfpenny on each ticket, would pay all expenses, and leave a handsome margin of profit. There need be no doubt of the plan being a success, and hailed by all with delight; for any change would be acceptable.

EVER AND AGAIN there crops up in the newspapers the report of an inquest upon one of the sect known as the Peculiar People. He or she falls sick, refuses to call in a doctor; but sends for the elders, who come and pray, and anoint the sick with oil. The consequence is, sometimes the sufferer gets better, sometimes dies. At the last inquest a woman was asked if she broke her arm whether she would not send for a doctor, and her reply was—"I shall not break my arm while the Lord watches over me and has me in his keeping." This is an evasion of the question; but without offering a doubt as to the efficacy of prayer, if a limb were broken would prayer set it, or would it get well of itself? If a simple fracture, it might heal with a certain amount of distortion; but in a bad injury, necessitating amputation, the result would probably be mortification and death. These Peculiar People seem to forget that man was blessed with intellect that he might help himself, and probably never read the fable of the carter who prayed to Jupiter for help against his stuck-fast wheel. They are not consistent, these people: they might as well make their secular habits fit with their religious, and sit down in peace, saying, "The Lord will clothe me and keep me clean, and if I hunger he will send his ravens to feed me." We are reminded strongly of an energetic preacher once insisting upon his tenet that the Lord helps those who help themselves, and saying, "Do you think that if my chimney smoked I should call a prayer meeting to set it right? No, I should send for the nearest bricklayer."

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d. Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 300.

September 27, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XXIX.

SECRECY.



H! ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute," Rivière might have said. He had never before had a secret from his wife, and now he had many. He had to make excuses — inventions as to how he obtained the money which he brought home; but he could not but exult as he saw how the comforts he was able to procure brought back colour to Marie's cheek and fresh

lustre to her eyes. For awhile Rivière was always on the watch for Lemaire; but the watch was in vain, and after a time he began to grow more careless, setting his dread down to imagination. Then came a time when at night he fancied he caught a glimpse of a figure gazing up at their windows, and felt sure that it was his enemy; but pursuit was in vain, or he found himself face to face with a perfect stranger.

As for Marie, she shivered at times, but by degrees grew more confident as the time glided on, and nothing in the shape of molestation occurred. They both began to feel too that they were living under laws that

would be an ægis under whose protection they could rest peacefully and secure.

And so the weeks passed on, Madame Rivière still being in ignorance that her husband went regularly to the Lawlers to give French lessons, after which Lady Lawler always insisted upon his staying to lunch, and frequently to read to her from some light French work if she felt indisposed for carriage exercise.

At such times, too, the little boy used to be brought down into the drawing-room, where Rivière would make a great fuss over him, amusing and talking to him; ready to yield, too, to all his little whims and vagaries—not a few, as may be supposed, in a child whose every wish was constantly gratified.

"He does frighten me so, though, Monsieur Rivière," said Lady Lawler, upon one occasion. "Did you ever see such a boy to climb? He is never happy unless he is up on the chairs, and trying to get on the table."

"It is the charming vivacity of his nature," said Rivière, with a smile. "Nature gives it to him that he may grow and strengthen at every turn. He is a little angel!"

It was at this turn of the conversation that Master Clive made a dab at his flatterer's face, and succeeded in getting a good firm hold of the visitor's moustache, which appendage he did not forget to pull.

Lady Lawler smiled, called the child "naughty baby," to get a few inarticulate cries in reply, for Master Clive was rather backward in his speech; fortunately though for Rivière, the boy relinquished his hold, for the owner of the moustache to smooth it softly with a long, thin finger.

Here Jane was summoned to bear the rebel away, and this was done, but not without a tolerable noise and a few grabs being made at the maiden's hair.

Sir Richard had protested against Rivière's visits until he had been snapped into

silence, and of late he had grown more accustomed to his yoke. He set it down to his wife's whim with respect to acquiring French; and avoiding as often as was possible all encounters with Rivière, he was to a great extent saved from the angry feelings which would have been sure to arise on seeing the lavish attention paid by Rivière, and the evident satisfaction evinced at the offered incense on the other side.

It took time; but Rivière grew at last to look upon Lady Lawler in her true light—that of a vain woman fond of flattery; and he paid his court accordingly, attended with due regularity, gave lessons when Lady Lawler was disposed to receive them, and when she was not, read until requested to desist on the plea that he must be very tired. The pleasant fiction of various pupils was kept up in Soho; and after the first few weeks Marie religiously abstained from mentioning the name of Grosvenor-square, firmly believing all the while that its existence was nearly forgotten by her husband.

It was with a certain amount of uneasiness that upon two occasions Rivière, after an hour spent in a neighbouring café, mounted to his humble apartments. Upon each of these days he had met a man who he felt sure must be Lemaire; and now his uneasiness increased as he felt the possibility that his fancied security had all been false, and that while he had been away from home and perfectly at ease, it was possible that his rooms had been watched, and even that some conspiracy was hatching against his peace.

But was this man that he had met Lemaire? The contour was the same; the peculiar look, too, in the eyes; but he was sufficiently well disguised to make Rivière doubt his identity. Had he met him with a bold, defiant look, all doubt would have been at an end; but the man had passed him with a heavy, apathetic stare, which mystified him until he reached home, where the anxious, troubled look upon his wife's face brought back the suspicion with redoubled force.

"Has any one been here?" he said, peering eagerly in her face.

"Been here? No," Madame Rivière replied. "Why do you ask?"

Rivière made no direct answer, but muttered something about business matters, and turned off the question.

Upon the second occasion of his encoun-

ter in the streets, the suspicion that he felt grew stronger. He was convinced that Lemaire had been to the house in his absence, and he felt that the fact was being kept from him, evidently from a dread of something worse happening should he know.

However, he dissembled, and hid his annoyance; but all the time the thought he harboured grew and grew, so that it troubled him more than he could have told.

It was not the first time that he had allowed suspicion to enter his breast, and the recollection of its former injustice ought to have been sufficient to drive it forth; but at this time Rivière, though with what he considered good intentions, was engaged in a systematic course of deceit, and himself deceiving, he was too ready to accuse others. The practice of one deception acted as a canker, and its poison spread, so that he proceeded to do the first thing which occurred to his mind—that was to watch; and he watched stealthily day after day, both going to and coming from his little home, but without effect.

CHAPTER XXX.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

MATTERS had been going on smoothly for some time at Grosvenor-square. The servants had been talking and making such remarks as they pleased; but apparently Sir Richard had allowed things to drift, and, yielding to the supremacy of his lady, growled mentally, but said nothing.

Rivière set off to give the lesson one morning, not in the best of tempers, for it had struck him that Marie was cold and distant.

"Where are you going?" she had said.

"Oh, only to give a lesson—some people in the west."

Madame Rivière said nothing; but her eyes flashed as she turned away and recalled for the hundredth time the fact that he had not told her where he went with such regularity. She suspected now; but she would not ask—she could not watch. No; he should tell her himself, or she would bear all in silence. That wicked woman!

This applied to Lady Lawler, whose bold, handsome face was ever rising before her in such times of trouble, like the evil genius of her existence. But ever as she suspected that her husband visited at Grosvenor-square, she became more self-contained, and determined to keep her thoughts to herself.

No pleasant state of affairs when husband and wife are suspicious one of the other, and with some ground for their suspicion.

Rivière had not been gone very long before Marie rose, very stern and thoughtful of aspect, dressed, and went out to provide some few necessaries wanted for their domestic use.

It was not the first time, and she was not surprised to find that before she had gone a hundred yards some one was walking close behind her; and she did not start as a voice said, in a tone just loud enough for her to hear—

"I see you then once again."

Madame Rivière did not answer.

"Have you attended to that which I begged and prayed of you to do?"

No reply—no motion on the part of Madame Rivière to show that she had heard a word.

"Heaven! that an angel should be made the slave of one who lives to deceive her!"

Still no notice taken; only Marie Rivière's lips were set very firmly, as she walked steadily on, without even increasing her pace.

"But I might have known that you were too good and trusting to disbelieve. You would not credit it if I went down here upon my knees in the open street and swore that he had an assignation in Grosvenor-square—that he has gone there regularly ever since you left."

Still silence, only that after a minute Marie heard a deep sigh. Then her follower spoke again—

"You do not believe it?"

Here they were opposite a shop where Marie had a commission to perform; and as she entered, still without a trace of emotion upon her handsome pale face, Monsieur Lemaire, looking sleek, dark, and treacherous as a cat waiting to make a spring, walked slowly on for a few yards before turning, and then walking back as far on the other side of the shop, kept up a regular sentry march, as if guarding a prisoner, till he saw Madame Rivière come quietly out, and continue her journey.

He was at her side as she passed, and she heard him sigh; but he might have been invisible, so utterly did she ignore his presence, and walk slowly on.

"Can I do nothing to prove my faith and truth?"

No answer; though the words were almost

breathed into her ear, as she walked on without hastening a step.

"You will not believe me?"

Madame Rivière paused for a moment, apparently attracted by something in a shop they were passing, and Lemaire seized the opportunity to whisper—

"Will you see, and judge for yourself?"

Madame Rivière was satisfied with her glance at the shop window, and passed on.

"It is for your own sake I ask it. Indeed, indeed it is."

Then he went on earnestly—

"I have long learned to bear in silence the scorn with which you treat me. Had I been a dog, you could not have been more cruel; but I bear all—everything in silence, as my fate, and I do not murmur. For myself all is past; but it maddens me when I see you—you so beautiful, a woman who should be worshipped with all a lover's mad idolatry, systematically cheated, deceived, your sweet, pure, womanly affection slighted, trampled under foot; and all for the sake of that vile, meretricious creature, who sits in diamonds to-day to meet him, while her poor, weak, deluded husband looks on in silence."

There was not a change in the expression of Marie Rivière's countenance. It was still very pale, and her lips were pressed closely together. One who knew her well might perhaps have detected that her thin, fine nostrils were slightly dilated; but even that might have been the result of the walk.

Now, basket in hand, she stepped into another shop, and came out—Lemaire still sentry at the door. Another shop, and a few more purchases—Lemaire still sentry.

This time the last commission was fulfilled, and Madame Rivière turned her steps homeward, with the black shadow of her life once more closely behind.

"I have watched for days that I might say this," he said, as he walked now at her shoulder. "You would not notice my letters; but I was obliged to tell you. Oh, Marie, Marie!—cannot you believe that I would die for your sake?"

The wayfarers were many here, and no words were spoken. Then, once again—

"Pray watch for yourself, and you will find that I have not deceived you. I ask no recompense, only that you will believe I do this for the sake of the woman I have always madly loved, and who never can be mine. For I worship you, Marie, for your

truth and goodness; for your fidelity to one who deserves it not; and my compensation is to think of what might have been had it been otherwise."

Nearer home now; and Lemaire, while he walked so closely and whispered his poison in her ear, evidently watchfully on the lookout.

"In another few moments my life will again be blank," he murmured; "but do not let my words be treated heedlessly. Seek this out. Reproach him and bring him back to your side; for it is for your happiness I am now concerned. Only let me see your heart at peace, and I shall be content. What greater recompense could I desire? Name it."

There was only opportunity for a few more words, and Lemaire was not slow to use it.

"You treat me with scorn and contempt, but I bear it—I have even grown to love it. And look here, Marie, it is unspeakable joy to me to be your slave; and that I am, come what may. You do not believe me now; but you will find out that I am no liar—no defamer of the character of Louis Rivière. When you have satisfied yourself upon these points, you will want help. You will want to return to fair, sunny France. Come to me then for help. Let me see you safely back in your own country, and then send me away—back here, if you will. Banish me from your sight for ever; but let me know that I have been of some slight service to you, if but once in my life."

Lemaire had timed his words well. As he finished, Marie Rivière crossed the road and walked into the open doorway of the house where they lived. She had kept up well: neither by gesture nor countenance could Lemaire have told that she had heard a word; but his eyes twinkled strangely from beneath his half-closed lids as he saw her pass slowly out of his sight, when he, too, disappeared, smiling and thoughtful, as he made his way towards the house where he knew the conspirators were holding a meeting. And by intuition he could tell something of what was going on in Marie Rivière's room. He more than suspected that it had been by a tremendous effort of self-control that she had listened apparently unmoved to all that he had said. For as he slowly walked away, the poor woman, with trembling knees, climbed to her room, closed the door, and, sobbing hysterically, threw herself

upon her knees to bury her face in the bed, and moan as if her suffering was greater than she could bear.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A STORM.

MEANWHILE Rivière had reached Grosvenor-square, where he was shown into the drawing-room, to find Lady Lawler dressed and about to go out.

"Ah, Monsieur Rivière, I am so glad you have come," she exclaimed. "I was just going for a ride."

As she spoke she rang the bell.

"Tell Edwards I shall not want the carriage," she said to the servant who answered her summons; and the man went out with a grin upon his face, which he further distorted by thrusting his tongue into one cheek—entirely, though, for his own edification.

"Yes, I'm so glad you have come," said Lady Lawler again. "Sir Richard has gone down into the country for three days, so we can have plenty of reading."

"But miladi will go out," said Rivière; "I will come again. Do not let the carriage be kept back."

"Oh, no," said Lady Lawler, smiling. "I can have the carriage at any time, when I cannot have a lesson. See what a good pupil you have. There, come and take a chair," she continued, seating herself; "and bring that with you."

She pointed to a French novel, and upon its being brought, she read about a couple of pages, after which she complained of hoarseness.

"There, Monsieur Rivière, you must read now," she said, throwing herself back in a fauteuil; and, taking the book, Rivière read on patiently for quite a couple of hours.

Then it seemed for the first time to occur to her ladyship that the reader might be just a little fatigued—an impeachment that Rivière, of course, denied. However, she rang for sherry and biscuits, after partaking of which Rivière rose to leave.

"You will be sure and come to-morrow?" said Lady Lawler.

"Do you wish it?" said Rivière. "Will you not have visits to pay?"

"Oh, no; you need not fear that. Pray come. You will, will you not?"

"I am miladi's slave," said Rivière, gallantly, as he took the extended hand, held it for a moment, and then, as if urged by an after-thought, pressed it to his lips, while the

weak woman flushed slightly with pleasure, and then started; for before Rivière had completed his old school salutation, Sir Richard Lawler, looking flushed and angry, strode rapidly over the soft carpet which hushed his footsteps, and, with an oath, struck the Frenchman so furious a blow that he staggered back against a side table, over-setting and breaking a great vase which stood thereon.

Lady Lawler seemed to lose her self-control, for she shrieked wildly, and tore at the bell; while, white with passion, Rivière recovered himself, sprang up, and darted at his assailant, who received him with a heavy blow full in the chest, which again sent him staggering back; for Sir Richard had been losing at the country race he had attended, and had come back suddenly, much flushed with wine.

Alarmed by the shrieks and furious bell-ringing, three of the servants now rushed into the room, to stare aghast at so unusual a scene in a gentleman's drawing-room.

For a moment or two Rivière leaned breathless and panting against a table, whose ornaments were plunged into wild confusion; then, small and weak as he was, he once more made at his muscular, burly aggressor, whose hoarse voice was now loudly heard.

"Here, Sellars, Williams, James, throw this scoundrel down the stairs—kick him out of the house!"

"Back, canaille!" exclaimed Rivière, with flashing eyes, as the servants approached; and there was that in his appearance which thoroughly kept them at bay, even though they were three to one.

"Do you hear me?" roared Sir Richard to his men.

"Yes, they hear you," hissed Rivière; "but now you shall hear me. Sir Richard Lawler, you have insulted me *afreusement*. I demand satisfaction."

"Satisfaction?" cried Sir Richard, mockingly. "You dog! Think yourself lucky, you treacherous hound, that I don't horse-whip you."

"Horsewhip me? You are mad!" said Rivière, speaking very slowly, but in a cold, cutting voice, while the glaring of his eyes and his extreme pallor showed the passion which was kept down by a tremendous effort. "Sir," he half whispered, "I ask for satisfaction. I am a gentleman, sir—for satisfaction."

"Am I to speak again?" roared Sir

Richard, ignoring Rivière, and scowling at his servants. "Out with the scoundrel at once!"

He then crossed to the bell, and tore at it furiously; for Lady Lawler, after trying vainly to make herself heard, had turned pale with alarm, and sunk fainting upon a chair.

"Back, canaille!" exclaimed Rivière, hoarsely, as the servants, urged by their master's voice, began to approach him with inimical intentions; and small as he was of stature, his waved hand and fierce look had their effect, aided possibly by the impression made on the servants' minds by the left hand, which seemed to lurk ominously within his breast.

"Them Frenchmen is so fond of the knife," muttered James, as he set the example of shrinking back; and one way or the other the servants were kept at bay, although there was nothing more fearsome in the breast pocket which Rivière searched than a card, which was so dirty from friction that he could not fling it in Sir Richard's face.

"You scoundrels!" roared the baronet, "must I do it myself?"

And he approached Rivière with flushed face and upraised hands; but the little Frenchman did not flinch, and Sir Richard stopped, confused, a couple of paces off.

"Sir Richard," said Rivière, fiercely, "you have insulted *your* lady here in the presence of your servants, and you have insulted me. I demand satisfaction."

"Curse you! will you put him out, or must I?" roared Sir Richard; and now, forgetting one dread in the other, the men made for Rivière, who dashed the back of his hand smartly in the face of one powdered colossus, and then, shaking his fist ominously at Sir Richard, glided rather than ran from the room.

HOW TO FURNISH.

ONE may feel disposed as Great Britons to be thankful that we do not live in Japan, of course not on account of the happy despatch, but because there it seems to be the rule to furnish a house with a mattress and a piece of matting. The total is very small, whether treated as to quantity or cost; and to a young couple beginning life, only think of the charming ease with which the ameublement of a house might be accomplished. Why, a ten-pound note would be enough

for any couple of moderate desires; while here in England, how many longing ones are kept asunder year after year by the dread of the upholsterer's bill?

It is easy enough if you are rich and can write cheques—though for the matter of that any one can write cheques: the difficulty is to get them honoured—then you can visit this or that establishment and select according to your taste, that pretty walnut suite for the drawing-room, the Spanish mahogany for the dining-room; and as for Charles's study, why, of course, that must be furnished with oak. Then those charming tubular brass bedsteads and polished pine furniture for the bedrooms; while for the nursery—but stay, we are going on too fast, and had better descend to the kitchen.

This, if you like to choose for yourself; though you may be monarchical in your ideas, like large-hearted, loveable old Thackeray, who is said to have given *carte blanche* to the big upholsterers, and said "Furnish me that house."

There are plenty of happy pairs, too, with affectionate papas and mammas ready to engage almost in hostilities over their offspring, and his or her choice; and who combine at last in furnishing their house for them, with everything spick and span new, from top to bottom, till the chairs seem almost too good to be sat on, and the carpets to be walked on; while the mirrors reflect nothing but bliss: for is not the furniture all the newcomers' own, and no bills to pay?

So much for the people with *couleur de rose* prospects. Let us now turn to that very large class who, while far from being impecunious, are so situated that the furnishing of a house, or even two or three rooms, and paying ready money for the goods, would prove a great burden. In London of course the transaction must be for ready money, though in the country credit may perhaps be taken; but even then the charges are high. However scrupulous a tradesman may be, he must have large profits if he gives credit; and, to put it moderately, Ready Cash will assuredly get as much for his eighty pounds as Credit Taker will for his hundred.

There is nothing unfair in this. If the capitalist lets his money rest, it must bring him in interest in one form or another; and if the said capitalist be a furniture dealer, and gives credit, he must add that interest to the profit already placed upon his goods.

You can hire furniture, 'tis true; but those

who have tried the system could tell strange tales of the unpleasanties connected therewith: labels on the various articles, perhaps a bill of sale, and certainly a considerable sum down before the goods are delivered. No; as a rule, the hiring of furniture will not answer.

A furnished house may be taken, but that means paying triple the ordinary rent; while as for second-hand furniture, none but an experienced housekeeper should dabble in that which in London proves to be, in eighty or ninety per cent. of cases, cheap, trashy stuff, a little rubbed to attract bargain-hunting flies to a spider's web.

The furnishing of a house, then, has been to many a problem hard to solve for some years; and more than one pair of housekeepers we have known have had to make it a slow process of doing a room a year, as funds could be saved. The piano people did meet the difficulty with those who desired such additions to their home, by the three-years' system and the small payments. The building societies, too, enable us to purchase a house with what we should have paid for rent; but it is only lately that an enterprising association has sprung up, as "The General Furnishing Company," of Southampton-street, which, to use their own words, enables "those who reside in furnished houses or apartments to furnish a home for themselves with the money now paid as rent; they becoming the absolute owners of the furniture after the lapse of a short term, free from further cost."

Now this looks hopeful, sounds well. Let us see how it is worked, and whether it will bear the blow which should make it ring and prove itself true metal. The company, it seems, have undertaken not to manufacture the goods they supply, and do not label or brand them. They ask but a small payment down, and no payment whatever until the goods have been selected and approved of. They require no obnoxious bill of sale or registered document. And in the event of the hirer failing in his part of the undertaking, the goods are sold by auction, and the hirer receives any surplus arising from such sale after the sums due are paid.

So much for the rules and regulations on both sides. Now, supposing ourselves to be named Smith, that we want a hundred pounds' worth of furniture, and that we think—as we do—that the above regulations are

perfectly fair for both sides, how are we to go to work to get our furniture?

In the first place, we have to send in a proposal and give a reference. If we reside in the country, the company require some person in London to guarantee our performance of our part of the contract. Then, if we are found to be respectable, pay-our-way sort of Smiths, the company furnish us with an order upon a first-class firm, whose charges are moderate. We go to this firm, and, saying nothing about our order, we select the furniture we require, finding that it is all marked in plain figures. In fact, we stand in the same position as any other Smith who goes with his money in his pocket, for our dealers allow no discount.

So far, so good. Now that we have selected and noted down for ourselves furniture to the amount, say, of ninety-nine pounds ten, and made it up a hundred pounds by getting another towel-horse, the invoice is made out—there, why not call it the bill—and sent to the company, who are alone responsible for the payment, and by whom the goods are purchased outright, “and let to the hirer for the term agreed on, a copy of the invoice being supplied to him; and in fairness to the hirer it is made a condition in the hiring agreement, as previously stated, that, should he from misfortune or otherwise find it necessary to relinquish the furniture, all the money arising from the sale of it shall be handed to him, after deducting the company’s claim.”

All, certainly, most satisfactory; but what have we, in the character of the Smith who required this furniture, to pay for the accommodation? The interest on the hundred pounds at five, six, or seven per cent., according as we arrange to make our payments weekly, monthly, or quarterly. The usual terms are ten and nine months, and the payment down on commencing is the same as the rate per cent.—five pounds if we undertake to pay weekly till we have cleared our debt by instalments of two pounds ten shillings per week, six pounds if we pay monthly, and seven pounds if we prefer to pay quarterly.

All this has been by taking the furniture on an agreement to pay for the hundred pounds’ worth in “one period” of ten months; but by paying a moderate increase of interest, and spreading the payments over three periods, or thirty months, the weekly repayment is reduced to nineteen

shillings, the payment down remaining the same—not a very serious burden, even to a beginner.

Employers would do well to encourage their clerks to furnish in this way, and so improve their position and the comforts of their home. A man with a well-furnished house is a man of substance, and a man of substance is generally looked upon as one better worthy of responsibility.

This is but a slight sketch of what really seems to be a boon for the many, and one which will doubtless be largely taken advantage of. To see the matter in all its bearings, as Captain Cuttle might have said, you must overhaul the company’s manifestoes. For our part, we are cogitating about that billiard table, so long in petto—green being so grateful to the wearied eyes; for the company seem disposed to meet their patrons with a large margin of choice.

MY LITTLE DITTY.

YES, both of them. In one case, the stone is neat and carefully chiselled by a mason. In the other, the stone is rough-hewn, and the words upon it ill cut; but they were formed by loving hands, and the drops that fell upon them might have softened the labour. Those two stones mark two little hillocks of earth, two tiny graves; and one is here, the other far away across the ocean.

It was in the early days of my married life that, after a dreary, sickening struggle here, I sought the shores of America, telling myself that there was bread there for him who would labour well with his hands. I found that I was right; and after choosing my plot of land, far away in Nebraska, I set to, stripping to the work, and setting up a rough tent as shelter for my wife and two little ones; and then glorying in the effect of the strokes of my axe, as I brought down tree after tree, till I had enough to raise myself a log hut—neighbours from a distance coming to lend a hand, and not leaving till we had it shingled in.

Those were bright days. A glorious climate, a rich soil, and nature waiting to bring forth in abundance for our benefit. We were truly happy there, far away as we were from all tokens of civilization; but what more did we need, pitched, as we were, amidst redundant beauties, and with a bright stream trickling by our door? The forest

behind my hut found me game for my gun, my garden and fields gave the rest; and after a hard, hot day's toil, I used to sit at my evening meal, tanned, rough, and bearded, and thank God for the pleasant life He had given us, free from care respecting rent or tax. There was food if we toiled for it, and toil had become a pleasure, so that we used to call the place our little Eden; and the future showed us a clear sky without a cloud.

I had had, as I thought, my share of trouble, and now all was to be bright; but when left to ourselves to measure out our portions of pleasure and pain, perhaps we are too sparing of the amount of the latter allotted to us. It was so with me; and I raised my voice in bitter murmurings on coming back from a long tramp one evening with my gun, to find our little girl—Pearly, we called her—stricken down with fever.

Now it was that I found out the disadvantages of my position, so far away from a town: there was not a medical man for fifty miles, and my wife implored me not to leave her alone when I made as if to go.

Poor girl, she read the signs in the little one's face more plainly than could I; and I will draw a veil over the struggle that racked with anguish both our hearts. Let it suffice that the next evening, cold at heart with despair, we two kneeled, one on either side of the little bed, gazing blankly at that which was now but clay.

I do not believe now that the most able medical aid would have saved the little thing; but it was terribly hard then to bear, and I blamed myself for what I called my selfishness in bringing those I loved into this wilderness.

And that was not all. There were the rites of the dead to attend to; and with my forehead wrinkled and hard, and every stroke of hammer or grate of saw sending a shudder through me, I roughly made a little coffin for the dear remains.

Yes, dear remains; for perhaps I had loved so well that little blue-eyed, prattling thing, whose golden hair glistened in the ruddy sun when she ran to welcome my step at evening; and as I finished my bitter task, I told myself that the world would never smile for me again.

Poor Kate, my wife, bore up like a martyr, and stood by me in the cool of the evening, as with the tears falling I dug a little grave

beneath a shady tree in the plot beside our hut—a place where the leafage of the forest rustled, and the silver rippling of the water could be heard as it rushed over the stones. There was a solemn holiness about the place; and the last golden rays of the sun bathed the rich, dark earth as I threw it out of the shallow pit, and then knelt and prayed that He who had taken our little one to himself would consecrate the ground for her sake, and save it in time to come from the spoiler's hand.

The stars were beginning to glisten overhead; but there was plenty of light from the west, as, taking advantage of the boy's sleep, I sadly, and with heaving breast, bore out the little coffin and laid it by the grave, poor Kate standing by me with a prayer book. Then, with her tears pattering upon the lid, I lowered the little coffin down, and turned over the leaves of the good old book that I might read the burial service; but at the first few words, a burst of sobs from Kate unmanned me, for she seemed now for the first time to fully realize our loss.

The book fell from my hand, and, with something seeming to rise in my throat to choke me, I caught Kate's hand in mine; and in a voice that I did not know for my own, I groaned—

"Oh, Father, let us know that she is happy, and we will grieve no more."

And then I started; for another voice that I did not seem to know said, softly—

"Amen."

I placed a white stone at the head of that little grave; and when, years after, we tore ourselves away, that stone was green with moss, and every simple flower that we collected in our walks bloomed round that little grave.

Times changed: the death of relatives in England drew us back to the old country at a time when the march of progress had brought a doctor within four miles of our little home in the backwoods, and a clergyman within twelve; but though we left one there, we brought three back with us to England.

Two months' residence in the old country, and then we were called upon again to render the last sad duties to our dead.

How different was this, the solemn-looking undertaker and his stealthy, quiet ways jarring upon us at every turn; the formality and adherence to routine; and then the day, with the hearse and mourning coach to take

us, the living, and our dead to a suburban cemetery.

It all jarred, and bitterly—that ride, at first at a slow walk through the street, and then, the undertaker and his men mounting, for us to be driven on at a trot.

The thoughts of the solemn old forest far away came back, and I thought of its grandeur and solemnity, with the wind singing a requiem amidst the tree-tops; and then compared it with the thronged and dusty road along which we passed. The driver's whip sounded sharply at times, as he lashed at some urchin, who could, in his careless enjoyment of life, seek a ride behind a mourning coach. At times I saw a woman give a pitying glance at the white hatbands, and my heart warmed towards her as it whispered that she must be a mother.

The cemetery at last, after a long ride through busy vehicles, whose drivers passed a mourning procession too often to attach much to the occurrence. It was a relief to drive in amidst well-kept flower beds and costly tombs; for the trees and grass were green, and it was something to think that the little one would be laid out here, where the air blew fresh and free—far away from the smoke and busy hum of the streets.

But again things jarred upon us; the tolling of the bell, and the regular, methodical way of all concerned at the cemetery chapel—even to the clergyman. Poor man! he meant to do his duty, no doubt; but it was terribly cold and formal. He had said those words of the burial service so often—prayers, thanksgiving psalms, and that awe-inspiring chapter of St. Paul—that the sense seemed to have become lost, and he spoke mechanically, without one glance at his book.

It was all over—the rattling of the clods upon the little lid and all; and we turned, dim of eye, to gaze around us, to see how many had been here upon the same journey of affliction. And now poor Kate's tears fell again fast, and my eyes turned more dim, for we were in the children's quarter—the portion of the cemetery appropriated to those of whom He said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me." How, at every turn, some parent's love displayed itself, in the tombstone with inscription half hidden by roses in the clustering flowers. At another by the simple wreath hung upon a white cross. One grave—such a tiny one—bore a stone with the one word, "Lily." Another was a mass of flowers. Another,

again, bore upon it a simple mourning card, preserved from the weather by a glass shade; and close by its side was one—surely it should have been a sailor's child!—whose mourners had placed thereon a large sea shell, upon which was graven some little prattler's name.

There was a sermon at every step amidst the hundreds upon hundreds of little graves in this city of the dead; and our hearts softened again as we thought of those who had sorrowed as we were called upon now to sorrow, and then even a feeling of thankfulness came over us, borne, as it were, from the many flowers around.

And we two had sown—here in God's acre—sown in corruption that which shall be raised in incorruption. And there, thousands of miles apart, are those two little grassy mounds, each spot painted, as it were, upon the brain; so that I gaze now at the glade by the solemn wood, now at the flower-besprinkled mead where the earth is ever being broken to make a resting-place for another and another, and still for another; and both those little grassy mounds are marked with a white stone.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE excitement consequent upon the disappearance of Mrs. Woodward quite put my brother-in-law's affairs out of my head for the time, and it was not until the next morning that it occurred to me to ask him how he had fared.

He replied that it was a long story, and would take time to tell.

"Have you any objection to my listening, Robin?" asked my wife.

"No," he answered, "you can stay if you like. If I was to say I'd prefer your going, you would hear it second-hand from Tom; and a story never loses in the telling. I'd rather you'd remain."

"I am really much obliged to you," replied his sister, "and I have a great mind to go upstairs."

But a natural curiosity induced her to pardon her brother's rude speech and stay to hear his story.

"When I reached Ardmore," began Robert, "if the gardener's wife didn't come out

and say she had received orders from Miss Middleton not to let me in."

"Not let me in!" I exclaimed in astonishment; "how dare you tell such a falsehood, when it is by her express invitation I am here?"

"I'm very sorry, Master Robert, but I dursn't disobey my lady's orders, which they was most stric'."

Two courses were open to Master Robert, either to climb over the wall or gate, or ask the woman to send his card up to the house; and after a moment's hesitation he decided on the latter; and thinking it would be his best policy to conciliate the gate-keeper if possible, he handed her a card and half-a-crown, and politely requested her to forward the former, with as little delay as might be, to Miss Middleton.

The lodge-keeper shook her head; doubtless she considered the bribe insufficient.

"You'll excuse me, Master Robert, which I dursn't go agen my lady's orders, which was most stric' as you was not to be let in if you comed again."

"Hang it!" exclaimed the young fellow, replacing the rejected coin in his pocket, "I must climb over the gate, that's all."

When the woman saw he was determined to do as he said, she held out her hand towards him, and in a whining tone of voice, meant to be apologetic, exclaimed—

"I'll send up your card, sir, if you'll bear me blameless to my lady."

"I'll bear you blameless," he replied, and gave her the card, but not the money.

"Sarah Ann!" shrieked the lodge-keeper, turning her head round towards her dwelling, "you come here directly."

A little girl of about twelve replied, and coming out of the lodge, dropped a deep curtsy to the gardener's wife, and in a humble tone demanded what was wanted.

"Take this up to the mistress," replied the lodge-keeper loftily, giving, as she spoke, Robert's card to her attendant, "and ask if she will see the gentleman, and be quick about it."

So speaking, Mrs. Mackey returned into her parlour, leaving Bob outside, where, in order to beguile the time, he lit a cigar; but after indulging in a whiff or two, he suddenly recollected that the heiress did not approve of smoking, and tossed away his fragrant weed, and approaching the gate, called out to the woman to bring him a glass of water, but no notice was taken of his request.

After a while the little girl returned, just as Robert's patience was almost exhausted, and he had switched the heads off all the dandelions within his reach. When he saw his young messenger return and enter the lodge, he naturally concluded that the gate would be opened to him at once; but no, some minutes elapsed, and Mistress Mackey remained hidden from his sight in the privacy of her abode.

"Mrs. Mackey," he presently shouted, at the same time laying violent hands upon the bell-pull, "if you don't come directly and open the gate, I will climb over and lodge a complaint against you with your master."

This threat had the effect of causing the surly janitrix to emerge into the open air, key in hand.

"Which I begs your parding, Master Robert, for a-keeping you; but you don't know my lady, which—"

"Which," cried Robert, impatiently, "I'll trouble you to unlock the gate, or I shall complain to Sir John about your impertinent conduct."

"Which I don't care whether you do or not, sir," she replied, defiantly; but apparently she knew she had gone far enough, for she presently unlocked the gate, and suffered the early visitor to pass.

Now, although Robert was so very impatient to be admitted, once he had passed through the gate he seemed in no hurry to reach the house; but sauntered slowly along, feeling, as he himself expressed it, as if he were going to be hanged.

At last he exclaimed, half aloud—

"I say, this will never do," and taking heart of grace, he presently stood before the house, and pulled the bell so violently that he set it ringing as if it would never stop.

When the footman answered the impatient summons, Robert asked him if Miss Middleton was at home, and being answered in the affirmative, he walked into the hall.

The footman threw open the door of the drawing-room, and reading the visitor's name from the card which had been handed to him, announced—

"Doctor M'Lachlan, miss."

And Robert having walked in, he closed the door behind him, and retired to his station in the hall.

Now, Robert M'Lachlan was not by any means a nervous fellow; but on the present occasion he felt as if he should drop when

the man had closed the door behind him, and he was left alone with the heiress; the recollection of his errand, however, revived him in a moment, and he walked across with confidence towards the couch upon which she was sitting, in one of the large bay windows that opened out into the flower garden.

She half rose from her seat as Robert approached, and held out her hand to greet him with a pleased expression.

Robert felt rather uncomfortable, he afterwards declared, but maintained his composure and presence of mind, at least to a great extent, and shook hands with the heiress, who desired him to be seated.

He told us that he felt decidedly nervous, for he knew that the lady had the advantage of him as to position—he being fully exposed to the light, while she sat with her back towards it, and consequently her face in shadow.

For a few seconds they sat in silence, Robert occupying himself in fidgeting his hat about, and taking a mental copy of the pattern on the carpet, conscious that the piercing eyes of the heiress were riveted upon his face.

He looked up, and found that she was smiling, probably at his embarrassment, which she could not but have noticed.

Their eyes met, and Robert felt certain that she was reading him through and through—a conviction that did not tend to reassure him; and after trying for a few seconds to return her gaze, he once more had recourse to an examination of the carpet.

He looked up again in a moment, and found the heiress still contemplating his features. Again their eyes met, and the lady smiled again.

"Well, sir knight," she asked, "how sped you with your wooing yesternight?"

The question so upset my brother-in-law that he dropped his hat—an exhibition of nervousness at which Miss Middleton laughed outright.

Robert was piqued; and his courage reviving, he looked up, boldly met the piercing eyes still fixed upon his face, and resolved upon a trial of strength.

For quite two minutes they sat staring at each other; then the lady dropped her eyes down to his chin, where she kept them fixed during the remainder of the interview, except for a second or so, once or twice, when

they travelled to his brow, or the parting of his hair.

When he saw the heiress look down, Bob knew that he had conquered, and answered the lady's question by repeating it—

"How did I speed with my wooing last night?"

"Yes," replied Miss Middleton. "You know you promised to give me a full and true account of your success or failure."

"Just so," he replied—"just so, Miss Middleton; and you said if I failed you would take into consideration a certain question I asked you the other day, and give me an answer."

"Just so," she repeated, with a slight elevation of her eyebrows, indicative of impatience; "because I knew that failure was an impossibility."

"You are mistaken, Miss Middleton—you are mistaken; I have done as you bade me—proposed, and been distinctly refused."

The lady gave a slight start, and for a moment—but only for a moment—examined the pattern of the carpet; then, for another moment, she looked straight into the eyes of the young man before her, and straightway reverted to the contemplation of his chin.

Bob was growing bolder every minute, and exclaimed—

"I have performed my part of the agreement, Miss Middleton, and claim the fulfilment of your promise."

"My promise?"

"Yes, your promise, Miss Middleton; you promised that if I were refused you would then take into consideration a question I asked you the other day."

"That I was to give you my love? Poor boy! you do not know what you are asking for."

"Pardon me, Miss Middleton, I do—I do indeed," exclaimed the unfortunate fellow, with difficulty refraining from once more falling at the lady's feet.

"No," continued the heiress, "you do not; but have patience, and I will answer your question in such a manner, I trust, that you will have henceforth no pretext for repeating it."

"Oh! Miss Middleton."

"Stop! I have considered the matter seriously—very seriously. I have no love to give. I shall never marry, for I can never love again."

"Then you have loved, and do so still?"

Miss Middleton coloured.

"It is ungenerous to take advantage of my words."

"Pardon me, Miss Middleton; but do you not—can you not—understand my feelings?"

"I both can and do, Robert; and had I guessed they were so deeply involved as they appear to be, I would never have permitted the present distressing interview—for it is distressing to both of us. But you will get over it, and soon bestow your affections on a worthier object."

"That would be impossible."

"Repeat that in twelve months from this time, and we shall see."

"Ay, and you will put me off then as you do now. It is not fair—you hold me at too great a disadvantage."

"I regret this meeting between us much; but I could not anticipate your failing in the mission with which I entrusted you, or I should not have allowed you to come here to-day. I am sorry to give you pain; but I am compelled, I find, to speak plainly."

"If you will never marry," exclaimed Robert, in reply, "neither shall I. Last night you over-persuaded me to do a foolish thing; with better luck than I deserved, I escaped from the snare you had set for me, and now you turn round and scold me."

Miss Middleton smiled.

"My poor boy, I do not scold you, far from it; but I want to save you from a life of misery if I can."

"Thrust me into one, you mean."

"Nonsense, boy!"

Robert coloured with vexation.

"Miss Middleton," he exclaimed, "no more trifling. I am here by appointment, to give you an account of my mission, as you have termed it. It was not my fault that I failed in it, but rather my happiness. I am now free; and whether it makes you angry with me or not, I must and will speak—I may not have another opportunity—I love you!"

The heiress cast down her eyes for a moment, sighed, and then answered—

"It would not be true, Robert, were I to say that I was indifferent to your love, for I am not. I am flattered by it, it is the richest offering you can present; but you must take it back. Nay, do not shake your head so incredulously—you must, you will. No person has a right to accept a present, if unable to make a suitable return. I am in that un-

comfortable predicament; as I have said before, I have no love to give to any one."

"Oh, Miss Middleton—Mary, I want no return from you. Only let me love you, and I will trust to time and my deep devotion to awaken even the very slightest response in your heart. Say you do not hate me."

"Hate you, Robert! no, indeed. But I cannot love you, nor ever shall. I must always take a very deep interest in your welfare; but pray dismiss from your mind, once and for all, the notion that any lapse of time, any amount of devotion on your part, can ever make me love you. No, it cannot be."

"Is there no hope?"

"Of my loving you?—no. But your visit has already exceeded the limits of a morning call, Robert; you must go. For the present I will say no more about Louisa; but I intend seeing her to-day, and I am determined to find out why she declined your offer, though I can partly guess; and should I find that you have not acted loyally in the matter, as becomes a true and faithful knight, I shall hold you to your promise. Oblige me by ringing for the servant. Thanks."

The footman answered the summons almost directly, and the heiress, holding out her hand to her visitor, remarked—

"Give my kind regards to your sister, Mr. M'Lachlan. Good morning."

Robert bowed over the dimpled hand that was held out to him, and with what he—Hercules that he was—considered a gentle pressure, but which made the lady's fingers tingle for some minutes after, he retired, in no enviable frame of mind; and arrived at Dumfarnaghalee to find the whole place in a commotion owing to the disappearance of Mrs. Woodward, in the search for whom he joined at once.

"Well, Robin," exclaimed my wife, as soon as the narrative was concluded, "my advice to you is threefold—have patience; do nothing rashly; hope."

"Just so," I replied. "For my part, I am of opinion that she will come round in time, if only you let her have her own way."

"I think so too," acquiesced his sister.

Robert sighed—

"I wish I did."

"Well, cheer up, Bob; you have a month's leave yet, and much may be done in that time."

"There is one thing puzzles me," exclaimed M'Lachlan; "if she really cares

for me, as you seem to imagine, and as I sometimes fancy myself, why should she have set me on last night to propose to the other one?"

"She wanted to try you, you may depend," I said.

"I believe she had some special reason," he replied; "but I don't fancy it is what you say."

"Well, never mind, old fellow," I answered; "as I said before, you have still a month, and much may be done in that time, with patience and perseverance."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OF a truth, much was done in the time which cannot be recorded here—in this chapter, that is to say: For instance, how Robert sped with his wooing—or shall I say wooings?—and how somebody else adventured in the same line, and with what result; how the two chapels were opened in Dumfermahalee, and what followed thereupon; how a general election took place, and who were the members returned to Parliament for the county and borough; with much more of interest to the inhabitants of my district, and let us trust, to the public at large;—all this must be postponed, in order to follow the course of events at the rectory after the mysterious disappearance of the rector's wife.

Six weeks had elapsed since Mrs. Woodward's flight without bringing any tidings of the fugitive whatever, although diligent inquiries had been made on every side.

Emma persisted in her belief that the poor woman had been spirited away from her home with the assistance of Margery M'Anvil; but, for my part, I felt certain that she had committed suicide in a fit of temporary frenzy, and such was also the general opinion in the neighbourhood.

After the first week Charles shut himself up in his house, and refused to see any one except myself, who had daily interviews with him.

To me he unburdened his mind, and confided all his hopes and fears, which I am not at liberty at present to divulge, and must leave the reader to determine for him or herself the state of my friend's opinions at that time.

During the period of his seclusion, Charles was compelled to secure the assistance of a curate, whose arrival among us was looked forward to by the whole community with

much interest and expectation. He turned out, however, to be a very common and most painfully ugly little man, and disfigured by a horrible squint.

On the other hand, he had assurance enough for half a dozen giants, and was active and energetic as might be.

From the very first day of his arrival in the parish, he concentrated his attentions upon the heiress, with what amount of success may be conjectured.

Six weeks had elapsed since the date of Mrs. Woodward's disappearance, and no tidings of the fugitive had been received, although inquiries had been instituted in every possible and impossible direction, when Isaac burst into the room one morning, just as we were sitting down to breakfast, and exclaimed, in a high state of excitement—

"She's found, sir—she's found at last!"

"Who is?" I asked—for it did not at the moment strike me that he meant the rector's wife; on the contrary, my thoughts immediately reverted to a speckled hen of ours which had been lost for some days.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed my wife, who, with true feminine quickness, had seized his meaning at once. "I am so glad! Is she at home, Isaac?"

"No, ma'am," he replied, "she aint. They want the master to go and see her before she's moved. Mr. Dunlop thought he wouldn't be wanting a line for that."

"For what?" I asked, for I was quite at sea.

"Of course not," returned my wife, absolutely ignoring my question. "Get the car ready directly, Isaac, and the master won't be a moment."

Isaac hurried off, and I continued to stare at my wife in a state of utter bewilderment.

"Make haste and get your breakfast, Tom," she exclaimed. "I will go with you, and will run off and dress while you are finishing."

Mechanically I discussed my coffee, eggs, and bread and butter, and had nearly finished when my wife returned.

"Are you ready?" she asked. She was carrying an armful of rugs, shawls, and other wraps.

Before I had time to reply, Jane came in to announce that the car was ready. She, too, looked excited. What did it all mean?

"Come along, Tom," urged my wife, preceding me to the door. "I have some brandy in your flask, my dear. Jane, have an eye to Anne and the children. I suppose Mr. Woodward knows, Tom?"

"I'm sure I don't know, my dear," I replied, "whether he does or not; but if he does, that's more than I do. What is it all about? who is found? and why are you carrying all those things?"

"Don't be stupid, Tom; make haste, do—we can talk as we drive along. We'd better take Isaac."

Still in a state of dreamy bewilderment, I mechanically followed my better-half, whom I had relieved of her load, to the door, where I found Isaac equipped in his livery, and already occupying his seat upon the box of the car. I took my place beside my wife, and our Jehu immediately drove off up the street at a brilliant pace.

"Where are you going to?" I asked.

"You know the way, Isaac?"

"Yes, ma'am."

It was a beautiful morning, early in June. The sun was shining brilliantly, and the birds were singing gaily in the hedges that bordered the road on either side, after we had left the town behind us. The trees and fields had not yet lost the fresh, verdant hue peculiar to youthful vegetation; for the seasons are late at Dumfernaghalee, and whereas in most parts of the island it was summer, we had as yet but reached the spring.

Our road lay along the sea-shore for a considerable way, not exactly on the beach, but at a varying distance; which, however, was in no part so great as to shut out from our sight the great white-capped waves that tumbled in, one after the other, in quick succession, with a dull, booming sound upon the rocks below the road, which wound round and round, following with provoking exactitude the various indentations of the coast—now uphill, now down an abrupt incline, now across a shallow watercourse, and then approaching with dangerous proximity an alarming and gloomy precipice.

We had fourteen miles to drive, owing to the circuitous nature of the road; whereas the true distance, in a straight line, from point to point, was not more than six.

After we had proceeded a little way, and I had had leisure to collect my thoughts, the truth suddenly flashed upon me, and I exclaimed—

"My dear, do you mean to say they have

at last found poor Mrs. Woodward's remains?"

"Her remains!" exclaimed my wife, in horrified accents—"no, herself."

"Who told you, my dear?"

"Isaac."

"Where did you hear it, Isaac?" I asked.

"Mr. Dunlop's man come in before you was up, sir, this morning. But it's in a dreadful state, he says."

"It!" cried my wife. "She is not dead, is she, Isaac, after all?"

"Dead, sure enough, ma'am—bin dead this ever so long, he says; and that's why they're wanting the master to send word to the crowner, he says."

"I am certain it is a mistake," said my wife; "and if there has been a dead body found, you may depend upon it that it is not Mrs. Woodward's. I was dreaming about her last night, and I am sure she is alive."

"Dreams always go by contrairy, they say, ma'am."

"Never mind," persisted my wife, "I am certain Mrs. Woodward is not dead."

I knew not what to say, and prudently held my tongue.

After a weary drive of two and a half hours, during which we—that is, Isaac and myself—had to dismount and walk up a dozen hills, we reached our destination, which was the farthestmost portion of my district to the north-west, and found a crowd of fully twenty persons assembled at Mr. Dunlop's.

"My duty to you, ma'am," exclaimed that gentleman as he assisted my wife to alight from the car. "The mystery is cleared up at last, doctor," as he shook hands with me. "Jim, take the doctor's horse round to the stable, and give him a good feed. Doctor, will you come inside, or will you go at once and see it?"

"I think I'd better go at once," I replied.

"Very well. Josiah, you take the doctor to the turf-shed. Mrs. Cochrane, let me take you indoors."

"Thank you, Mr. Dunlop," returned my wife, "I would prefer going to see her—rather, it; for I feel sure Mrs. Woodward is not dead, and this body is that of a stranger."

"Indeed, ma'am," replied the farmer, "it's no sight for a lady. You'd be better

to come indoors, ma'am—Mrs. Dunlop will be proud to see you."

"You had better go, my dear," I said to my wife. "When I have seen the body, and what state it is in, I will tell you whether or not you ought to see it."

"Very well, Tom," she assented. "I'll wait till you come back."

"That's right, ma'am," exclaimed the farmer. "This way, ma'am. Josiah, you go 'long with doctor."

I followed Master Dunlop—a stout, rosy-faced lad of fourteen—to a shed at some distance, round which a group of peasants had collected. As we approached, they nodded familiarly, and wished me "Good morning"—for they are an independent race the Dumfernaghaleeans, and never take off or even touch their hats to any one except the landlord, his agent, and perhaps the rector of the parish.

"Well, boys," I said, replying to their salutations, "I understand some of you made a discovery this morning. Which of you was it?"

"It was Johnny Logan," answered Master Dunlop, indicating one of the group of labourers whom I knew by sight. "He found it when he was down on the shore, pulling in weed."

"Well, Johnny," I asked, "how was it?"

"I was pulling in the weed," replied Mr. Logan, "and saw something white among it; and at first I thought it was a dead dog, or maybe a goat; but when I cleared away more of the weed, I saw what it was, and it gave me such a turn, I had to sit down on the rocks for a couple of minutes. Then I shouted out to Billy Aswell, and he come running, for he thought it was a treasure, and between us we managed to hook it on shore. Then we run for the master, and he sent Billy off for you, doctor, to know whether it was dead."

"Where is it?" I asked.

"In the shed here, doctor," shouted a dozen voices all at once. "The master would have it carried up."

"And quite right, too," I replied. "Let me see it."

"This way, doctor—this way," and, preceded by the farmer's young son, and followed by the men, I entered the shed which was used for storing turf in the winter, and saw the body lying in a corner, covered over with a piece of canvas.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

PLAYING A GAME AT CARDS.

YOUR humble servant was most shamefully snubbed last night at the De Browns', where he was inveigled into taking a hand at whist—short whist; and, besides losing twenty-two and sixpence, brought down upon his head the vials of Miss Tompkins's wrath. Miss Tompkins is aged twenty-nine, and has been for some time past—some considerable time past; and though it is pleasant to be scolded by some women, Miss Tompkins is decidedly not one of that some; and the way in which she showed her teeth—metaphorically as well as really—and the setting, was something unpleasant. However, yours obediently will not be hard upon her, though she did go about the room telling people that I had revoked, and had no more idea of what the Peter was than a bumpkin. Poor woman, had she not lost twenty-two and sixpence?

Urged by the above, I will confide the fact to you that I am not a good whist player; but I am always moved by an excelsior-ish feeling, and have determined to improve. "Always go to the roots," my grandmother used to say; and somebody else—I am not sure whether it was Æsop, Solomon, or Miss Tox—declared that no workman could properly understand the use of his tools unless he knew how they were made. Result: I determined to go and see how playing cards were made; and having received a most courteous invitation from Messrs. Hunt and Co., of Southwark-street, I made for their manufactory.

It was no new name to me, for it brought back a time when—don't ask me how many years ago it was—I, a little bare-legged urchin, was led through the palatial, solemn rooms of one of the great Pall Mall clubs; and, among others, remarked the card-room, where I was informed that gentlemen sat and played; and, not content with having packs of cards to begin with, would, if their luck were bad, throw the pack under the table and have a fresh one. It was very wasteful, I thought; but I did not much mind, for I had a pack of these unlucky cards presented to me, and went home in triumph, though they would not go into the pocket of my little plaid frock.

Let me see, that was in the days when George the Fourth—but no matter; those

cards were a treasure, and amused me for months; for I cut up the court cards, and arranged the various crotchety-coloured patterns in boxes made of the others; and I perfectly well remember that the name on the ace of spades of that pack was Hunt.

I reached the factory, and being rather a nervous man, I was startled on being shown into the presence of the Jack of Hearts himself. I would not believe it at first, but the fact was patent: there he was, breathing before me—not in his court suit, and with a heart suspended like a Mahomet's coffin, invisibly, over his shoulder, but dressed in ordinary morning costume.

We saluted, and said a few words about the weather, and then I had to bite my tongue; for it seemed as if some spiteful fiend were prompting me to insult the very polite individual in question. I felt as if I must say to him, "I say, how about those tarts?" and I feel sure that he would not have liked it; for, after all, we have only tradition to trust about the Queen of Hearts making the tarts, and that piece of annexation; and, set aside the rudeness of the question, one might have caught a veritable Tartar.

However, I overcame the desire, and found myself in excellent hands, as I was led from room to room of the great place. I first learned and saw that the various figures, hearts, clubs, diamonds, and spades, were printed in red and black ink, in the ordinary block printing fashion, upon fine thin paper, a sheet of which upon being taken up showed a suit, all but the court cards, which are printed separately; for if you take up a king, say, you will find that he is bedecked with varied lines, red, blue, yellow, and these are the subjects of separate printing. Piles of these printed sheets are passed; and noticing that the figures were of precisely the same old-fashioned type familiar in childhood, I was informed that the Anglo-Saxon taste is so conservative that any attempt to modernize the well-known old countenances and garbs is a failure.

We had seen the fronts—the backs were a more important part, and ranged from plain white to the most gorgeous floral or set patterns; but of that anon: first we had to see the making of the card itself. In the first place, a couple of sheets of firm paper were pasted together with a very carefully prepared paste cooked on the premises. This pasting together was to form "middles;"

and to follow the making of the card throughout, we had to see the sheet next "mingled;" that is, a sheet of pips—hearts, diamonds, or what not, about a dozen of the ordinary cards—placed on one side (a whole suit, mind), and a back sheet of fine paper placed on the other.

These are afterwards pasted on—a few sweeps of a big brush do it—and the back and front, adhering to the middle, form now a very rough cardboard sheet, which, with thousands more, is packed in a hot room, where, like plates in a scullery rack, they dry slowly, and at a certain temperature.

We will suppose that our sheet is dry, and take another for substitute—take a few dozen and see them interleaved—that is, have thin paper placed over their faces to keep the coloured ink from damage; then they are laid between thin metal plates, all rough and crumply as they are, and rolled—that is, sent through and through between polished steel rollers, which give the cards up at last tolerably smooth, hard, and firm. The sheets, which are now like cardboard with rough edges, have to be made ornamental on the backs. We will suppose those that we watch to be meant for a very handsome enamelled pack, and we follow it into a room where men and women are busy—blue men and red women, according to the tint of the great vessels of colouring material that they stir, and then with a light, broad brush sweep over the back of the card. Is it too Hibernian to say that they looked like a party of coloured whitewashers? Anyhow, let it stand, while I state that this coloured wash dries on the card back and forms the enamel.

A few steps farther on, and we are where there are thousands of washed-backed card sheets, dry, and of all tints—pink, blue, lavender, yellow, even black; but they look very shabby and rough, and the drying process has made them "cockle" and "buckle" and look out of shape. Away, then, they go to the bright rollers, where they pass through and through, to come out more highly educated each time, till they really look bright and enamelled. Next comes a gentle brushing over, and then a brilliant pattern is impressed, perhaps in many colours—and the card is finished? Not at all, for here comes in now a contrivance that shall make the card waterproof and durable. It is already so hard and firm that it will not split at the corners; in fact, a dirty old

pack is shown us that has the corners completely worn off—worn round, and yet the cards are firm, hard, and elastic—they will deal, and do not cling together as if asking you to wet your thumb. But this other contrivance, this waterproofing? Here it is: Sheet after sheet is brushed over with a limpid fluid, and dries in such a way that the completed card may be sponged over without injury, though washing is not advised.

The rollers made so much noise that your humble servant forgets whether the cards were once more run through; but he knows that once during their existence they were subjected to a frightful pressure of one hundred and eighty tons, which you will confess is enough to harden anything—even a Poor Law guardian. Information is tendered that this gets rid of air bubbles. No doubt it does!

On our way to another department, we have glimpses of men getting ready for printing machines, and preparing the blocks for ensuring correct “register,” as it is termed—*i.e.*, making each printing of half a dozen colours fall exactly in its right place on the back of a card, which would otherwise look blurred and indistinct. We have a peep, too, at the room where the electrotype blocks of all the patterns used for printing are kept—thousands of pounds’ worth; and then find ourselves where a simple process is going on, that of cutting up the sheets.

These large sheets are first divided into strips, each having the form of some half-dozen cards, and these are placed before boys armed with a chaff-cutter sort of fixed knife, with which—chop—the rough edge is off; and chop, chop, chop, chop, chop, in rapid succession, the cards are cut off, neat and square, but only one by one; and there they are, ready for packing.

The rapidity and exactness with which a lad performs this is surprising—one boy cutting up about sixty-four dozen in a day; and these heaps go now to a long room, where a number of girls and women stand at a table, apparently practising dealing, or having a game to themselves, but really, after a particular order, sorting out the cards into complete packs. These are then placed in stamped wrappers, the Government three-pence being demanded for each pack—the commonest pinpoint-back cards, and those with a lovely kingfisher or Japanese butterfly pattern, by some first-class artist, whose work

is made more beautiful by the aqua-tint process introduced by Messrs. Hunt. Then comes the outer wrapper, the sealing up, and the adding by busy string-armed fingers of a single pattern card to indicate the contents.

Your servant is most kindly treated, even though the bustle is great; for winter is coming on, with long card-playing evenings, and country and export orders make great calls on the establishment. We are not yet “through,” for there is the stock to see of patterns quaint in their well-known old-fashioned fronts, but whose backs are really beautiful works, produced by the combined efforts of able artists and energetic and sympathetic manipulation. The designs are endless, and the tints all that could be desired, from the soft, subdued neutrals, to the brightest, which flash with gold. There is nothing vulgar, though, for an artistic element pervades the whole work, though it must be added that the old-fashioned patterns are still made for those who will not depart from their old ways, and cannot see the beauties of the present time.

Have I anything more to say than that the cards when handled are thin, firm, and metallic in their feel? One deals them with a decision that is new, and as to losing a deal, it seems impossible. The sense of feeling, then, is certainly pleased; and it must be a strange sense of sight that does not share the enjoyment as the cards glide glassily over the green cloth—a floral flash of beautiful design, made quaint by mingling as they lie. Art should be in every dwelling, and why not even salute us in our game of cards?

VERY SEEDY.

I WAS late last night. I am aware of the fact for more than one reason. My eyes feel as if nothing but a sardine knife would open them; and when they are open they behold that my boots were not “put out,” and that, although yesterday and yesterday evening were quite dry and fine, the boots are particularly dirty. My waistcoat is on the floor, and on raising it I find it heavy. The pockets are full of coppers and small change. My watch has not been removed from it, or wound up. My latch key, I am subsequently informed, was left in the door, where it was pointed out by the milkman to the cook. In spite of the heavi-

ness of the contents of my waistcoat pockets, the amount, when arrived at with some difficulty and anxious throbbing of the brain, is not large. I groan sub-audibly, but my anxiety is presently diminished by finding a loose sovereign in my overcoat pocket, together with some large, coarse-looking cigars, and a piece of blue cardboard, with "Ma-zeppa" printed on it.

My overcoat was on the floor, exactly beneath its accustomed hook. I am on the point of making some sotto voce remark upon the curious condition of things, when I find articulation arrested by some substance in my mouth resembling badly prepared parchment. This eventually turns out to be my tongue, though on looking at it in the glass I fully expect to find "And whereas" or "This indenture" inscribed upon it. On taking one brief but comprehensive glance at my features in the mirror, I again groan. I resume recumbency, pull the clothes over my head, and try to sleep.

But no. I have "murdered sleep: the innocent sleep." Partial remembrances and dread uncertainties of the previous night produce cold perspiration and tremor. That I dined with my cousin Charley from Oxford and two "men" at the club is clear to my disordered memory; and a very jolly dinner we had. But we went "somewhere" afterwards. Oh, the folly of that "going somewhere afterwards"! How often have I made a covenant with myself that I would never do it again! This, however, shall really be the last time.

I have a wretchedly remorseful idea that I was quarrelsome late in the evening, and grossly insulted one of the "men;" but there is no corroborative evidence in my memory. Did I or did I not? Also did I or did I not abominably abuse a cabman, and what for? Did I or did I not have the hiccoughs for about an hour and a half, and break several glasses in demonstrating how I could stop them "at once" by three swallows of cold water, and putting my fingers in my ears? Alas! never was one swallow more ineffectual in constituting the proverbial summer than were those three swallows, thrice repeated, in relieving me, if memory serves me, from the Bacchanalian spasm which afflicted me. What made me burn my mouth and moustache with the wrong end of my cigar? I have smoked hundreds of cigars, but such an untoward event has never before occurred.

What's that in the corner? A black cat that has been run over? As I live, it is my hat! My Lincoln and Bennett! Oh, "things must not be thought on after this way—it will drive us mad." Something must be done. And at once. Soda and B. I always keep a little B. in my medicine chest; but how about the soda? Ah, here is Mary with the hot water.

"Thanks. Stop a minute."

My dressing gown. Open door cautiously.

"Mary, I'm not very well this morning."

Mary smiles a reply, and intimates that my landlady has been "going on" about the latch key. I intimate, with some severity, that such accidents will happen; and that my uncle, who is a dean, makes a point of leaving his latch key in the door three nights a week, to see if the police are on the alert.

"But look here, Mary—I want some soda water, and don't want *her* to see it."

Mary says—

"All right. I'm a-goin' to the coney for the paper drekly, and I'll bring it under my apern."

"It!" I almost shriek—"I want two at least!"

She is gone. Bless her chapped hands and dirty "apern." A ministering angel, gentlemen.

She appears to be away for hours, during which time I make good resolutions. On her return, with admirable care and secrecy she conveys the cargo in safety to my door. But then—fatal error!—in endeavouring to hold both bottles in one hand while knocking at the door, the contact produces that inevitable and unmistakable chink which must proclaim to all the listening earth that the product of Schweppe is on the premises.

However, the contraband cargo is delivered; and now to compound the resuscitating drink. The difficulty, as we all know, with soda water is to induce it to introduce itself to our notice with moderation; but, on this occasion, of course, the cork obstinately refuses to move. I swear not at all, but I must get a corkscrew out of my dressing case. I give you my word that my back is not turned on that bottle of soda two seconds, when a report as of a pistol takes place, and the wall and ceiling are saturated. I am just in time to save about half, to mix with my brandy. I drink it off,

and lie down. Ah!—a-a-a-h! I begin to feel better. A newness of sensation takes possession of me. I become wakefully dreamy. Confidence returns. I begin to look upon my proceedings of the night before with something of levity.

What a jolly dinner we had! Suppose I did insult Charley's friend. He is a young whipper-snapper. I'd punch his head for two pins. Fellows, when they go out together (yawn)—I'm getting sleepy—when they go out together, must take the (yawn) rough with the smooth. Wonder whether Queen Elizabeth took the ruff with the smooth.

Here I chuckle, and fall into a kind of doze, occasionally opening one eye to observe the shadow on the blind of an idiotic bluebottle, which travels by spasmodic darts continually round one pane of the window. What a rum old bluebottle! May we ne'er want a friend, or a bluebottle to give him. Chuckle again. Organ: "Meet me in the lane." I am really just tumbling off to sleep, in spite of "Any ornaments for your fire-stoves?" conflicting with the organ, when I am finally forbidden that luxury by the clank of a pail-handle outside my door, and the commencement of such a scrubbing as I have never yet heard in Mrs. Grimes's establishment. Why is it that when Somnus is fickle, and one is most anxious to be at rest, the occasion appears to be seized for scrubbing outside the bed-room door? "Outside," did I say? The soapsuds actually ooze into the room, and the scrubbing-brush is persistently knocked against the door, and round the wainscot, for a longer period than it would take to scour the whole house down.

The effect of the S. and B. begins to wear off, and I am restless. Sha'n't go into the City to-day. Send post-card, and dine somewhere quietly at the West-end. Stop! Didn't I at the last moment insist upon those fellows dining with me to-day? But when? And where? Ah, woe is me! And woe is every young or middle-aged man who, not content with a good—nay, luxurious dinner, followed by a cup of coffee and cigar, and sweet converse therewith, must needs "wind up" the evening. How many such evenings have been wound up in dirty, fusty, low places, amid low company, vile tobacco smoke and strange oaths, and floated in vitriolic Champagne and other drinks, to the derangement of brain and stomach, to the bru-

talizing of humanity, to the ruin of purse, character, and health? And yet my Lord Tomnoddy, an hereditary legislator, is to be found in such places and in such company. In such places and such company are to be found Sir Carnaby Jenks of the Blues, and Lieutenant Tregooze, whose nerves ought to be at the service of their country instead of being rotted away in "winding up" the evening. What was it that degraded some of the brightest geniuses, the most elegant wits, the most polished gentlemen of the last and the early part of the present century? What was it? Why, it was called "The Finish." Let me, then, De Courcy Smith, member of the Stock Exchange, and gentleman of this the nineteenth century, declare that I will have no more of it—that never more will I leave the gentlemanly atmosphere of a club-house, or the refining and charming society of a ball-room, to post off in a fleet Hansom, with a fast Oxonian or with Lieutenant Tregooze, for the purpose of "winding up" the evening at three o'clock in the morning.

Hallo, a double knock! Mary rushes upstairs. A telegram. It is from Charley.

"We—waited—breakfast—till—half—past—nine—Off—to—Putney—to—look—at—new—boat—dine—with—you—as—arranged—Club—Seven."

Yes, I remember now. It was even so. And I promised some rare dish by Fin Bec. But how is it those fellows were not seedy? What heads! What stomachs! The fact is, my dear De Courcy, they are about ten years younger than you. If they go on, they, in their turn, will not indulge in "winding up" the evening without being repentant and very seedy.

I must get up.

CHINESE BEGGARS.

"MENDICITY," observes a French writer, "is an evil hitherto incurable, and which seems inherent in human nature, and common to all latitudes and to all civilizations." The remark is a very true one with regard to all nations; but we know of no country on the face of this earth where beggars swarm as they do in far Cathay. There an ancient civilization and a patriarchal system of government have done nothing for them. When the elaborate machinery for administering the affairs of that vast empire was

formed, boards and councils were constituted to direct the chief departments of State; but among them is found no Poor Law Board, nor any office analogous to it. This being the case at Peking, we cannot be surprised that in the provinces likewise the poor are left to chance and public charity. In most countries, more or less severe enactments have been passed against vagrants; but "if it be a mark of civilization to repress mendicancy by severe measures, China must confess, for once, that the 'Outer Barbarians' have outstripped her." So says Mr. Moule in some interesting chapters on China and the Chinese, to which we are indebted for much of the substance of the following remarks on the different classes of beggars. The observation is a perfectly just one, for the Chinese authorities are everywhere much averse to interfering with the beggar tribe; and, indeed—especially in times when rice is scarce and dear—we may add that they are absolutely afraid of them.

The condition of the Chinese poor is very bad, judging from a European point of view; for in their wretched huts—they cannot be called cottages—there is an utter want of what we consider "home comforts;" the very expression is a mockery in connection with them and their mode of living. What wonder, then, that beggars swarm in every direction, for the line of demarcation between the very poor and the beggar classes is very slight? We must now proceed to give some particulars respecting the general condition of beggars in China.

The beggars of most Chinese cities may be divided into three principal classes, each miserable, dirty, and designing; but with differences, which must excite and demand pity in varying degrees. One class, the most numerous—perhaps most powerful, best organized, and most prolific in resources—is under a "head man," a species of gipsy king. This man is raised to his high dignity on account of his superior talents as a knave and extorter of money. "Whatever the beggars procure by begging," says the writer of a Chinese romance, "is given to the head man; and in time of rain or snow, when they cannot follow their calling, their chief provides them with food and supplies them with clothing." We would remark, in passing, that if the food is as fragmentary as we know, from personal observation, the clothing always is, the beggars must live occasionally on extremely short commons.

The head man's duties are to estimate the wealth and resources of the chief shops in the cities, excepting, it is said, those of tailors and other artisans. He goes round to the owners of these shops, and bargains with them till they come to satisfactory terms. Two slips of paper, one green and the other red, are then pasted up in the shop, on which are set forth the head man's name, the amount of black mail agreed upon, the days of payment, and a warning to the fraternity not to annoy the shopkeeper. The shop is thus protected, for the time being, against molestation by this man's tribe; but if the owner refuses to come to terms, the consequences are disastrous, for a crowd of ragged, filthy, brazen-faced, stentorian-voiced beggars is let loose upon him, and the transaction of business is rendered almost, if not quite, impossible, until at length, in his despair, he gladly agrees to pay a heavier contribution than at first demanded. The payment thus made by large shops is from thirty to thirty-five shillings a year. Only men are admitted into the beggars' clubs or guilds, and they all draw from the funds, accumulated as before described, certain stipulated sums, according to their abilities. The ceremonies attending births, marriages, and deaths furnish the beggars with great opportunities. If a wedding be going on, they appear, shouting "Good luck to you! may you grow in wealth and increase in honours! may your halls be filled with gold and precious stones! may you have numerous sons and daughters! Good luck to you, good luck to you!" On receiving a small gratuity they depart; but only to reappear the next day, and, after the expression of further congratulatory sentiments, to demand the fragments of the marriage feast. Much the same takes place after funeral feasts, and on such occasions it sometimes happens that a considerable sum has to be distributed among the beggars before they will allow the burial or ancestral sacrifice to proceed without interruption. To attain their end, they will even go the length of getting into the grave and preventing the coffin from being lowered.

The following is a curious use to which beggars are sometimes turned. When a very irate creditor is weary of his debtor's delay, and cares more to annoy the man than to possess his money, he gives his bill to these beggars—compounding, perhaps, for part of the spoils; and sends them day by day to

worry the miserable debtor into settling the account. Among their other means of gaining a living, beggars are employed to bury criminals after an execution; others, again, act the parts of shipwrecked sailors, &c., &c., and spread before them on the ground a harrowing description of their supposed sufferings. Some attach wisps of straw to their children, implying thereby that, in consequence of the extreme distress of the parents, they were for sale; though, if the truth were known, it would probably be found that these very children had been before hired to be pinched, and made to cry in order to excite pity!

Another class goes by the name of *Kaou kwa tsze*, which means "high-flower people;" but, notwithstanding their high-sounding title, they are decidedly a grade lower than the former class. They live in the outer courts of certain temples, and consist mainly of refugees from other districts. These poor wretches have their regular sources of income as well as the former class. In the middle of the seventh moon, when sacrifices are offered to the spirits from the tombs—who are then supposed to be maliciously using their brief month's holiday to sow sickness broadcast—these poor beggars come and claim the remains of the feast, which, after all, is but a scanty one. They also beg from shop to shop, and their importunity seldom fails to bring them some alms, though generally of a trifling amount, and such as a sturdy beggar in England would scorn to accept. There was in old times, Mr. Moule remarks, a special tax levied on shops, professedly to defray the expenses connected with the supply of ornaments and face-powder for the females of the Emperor's palace. China is large, and her shops innumerable; and had the tax been rigorously enforced, and faithfully expended according to the original design, face-powder sufficient to bury domestics, wives, Emperor and all alive would have been yearly procurable. The tax is not now exacted; but, by a sort of mutual consent, the beggars take part of the King's remitted dues.

At the new year beggars of this class may be seen, in more than usually ragged guise, going from house to house, and demanding money as protectors against evil spirits. At the winter solstice, also, they go about under the title of *chu tsauo wang*.

This tsauo wang was a literary man, who had nearly attained the senior wrangler-

ship in the great competitive examination, when small evil spirits at night so scratched and disfigured his face that the Emperor of those days (about a thousand years ago) felt unable to give him his degree! The poor man was in despair; and to console him the Emperor gave him a knife three feet long, with which to rule, and if possible destroy, all evil spirits. The beggars undertake to do this, in his name, for all householders who will give them a bowl of rice.

The third class of beggars is that for which an asylum is provided. This is called by names signifying asylum for the fatherless and distressed, or asylum for relief. These beggars are not able-bodied, like most of the others, but are blind, lame, or maimed, or suffering from wounds, commonly self-inflicted. They often blind themselves to attract pity, when they are too lazy to earn an honest and independent livelihood. Besides actual self-mutilation, of which we could quote numerous instances, these beggars are not one whit behind their European confrères in simulating fractures, wounds, &c.; and so crafty and skilful are they, that their devices need very careful inspection before the hideous imposture can be unmasked.

In some towns there are ranges of buildings which are appropriated to deformed and disfigured beggars, where they constitute themselves into a regular guild, and only admit fresh members to the full privileges of the institution at the price of a sumptuous entertainment. The Emperor allows them a pittance of about three shillings a month, and they probably pick up a good deal by begging in the streets. Rich people in China are often very charitable, and distribute clothing and food to a great extent among such poor wretches as these; for example, we are told that, in the winter of 1832, which was remarkably cold and rainy, a Chinese lady in Canton caused five hundred jackets to be distributed amongst the aged and infirm beggars of the city.

There are large numbers of beggars who have been convicted of theft, and who, though set at liberty, still carry about with them the badges of their crimes, most probably with the view of exciting compassion. Respecting these, Mr. Moule gives us some curious information. Some, he says, wear a very small wooden collar, a model of the canque, borne by convicted thieves in the streets. Others carry a heavy stone on their

shoulders from morning to night, their crimes being greater than the first class. Others, again, have a heavy iron spear padlocked to their foot and shoulder: these are chiefly men banished from other provinces. Others, more light-hearted and less burdened by manacles, whirl bowls of water round with juggler skill. Others go through all the exercises of the noble art of self-defence, only beating the air, not boxing a brother-beggar; and begging priests are frequently met with—not true mendicant friars, sent forth from monasteries, but either outcasts from temples or soi-disant priests. There is a class of beggars rather different from those already mentioned, consisting of strolling singers called “sing lotus flower men.” They expect a more liberal largess than ordinary beggars get, and are sometimes employed by the authorities as spies. As they go singing about shops, tea houses, restaurants, &c., they keep a sharp look-out, and often manage to get on the tracks of absconding miscreants.

The number of beggars in some Chinese towns is almost incredible; in Ningpo, for instance, a city in which the population was last year estimated at 115,000, they are said to amount to between 10,000 and 11,000. There is no national system for relieving them, and they are left to do very nearly as they like, no Chinese statesman having as yet had the courage to deal with the difficult question efficiently. In former days, at Peking, the Government used to keep up certain small tenements for their shelter, which were called “feather houses,” from their being furnished with quantities of feathers to impart a little warmth to their wretched occupants in the piercing cold of a northern winter. By the philanthropic efforts of foreigners, an establishment was started at Shanghai in the early part of 1868, called the Home for the Chinese Poor. Its objects were excellent, being to clear the streets of beggars, to afford relief to the deserving poor, and to drive impostors from the European settlement. Judging from the following brief summary of the statistics of the Home, we fear that the result hardly answered the expectations of its promoters, and that but little permanent good was done. During three months, 401 people were admitted, of whom only two were women; 847 dollars were contributed by foreigners, and 444 dollars by natives (less than £300 in all, a small sum for a wealthy commercial

centre like Shanghai). Regular work was planned out for the inmates, such as basket-work, rope-making, &c., and they were daily employed in cleaning the buildings, improving the swampy ground near, &c.; but the summer set in, and the whole attempt came to a close before the experiment could be fully tested.

The Chinese beggar is incorrigible. He seems thoroughly to enjoy his wretched and squalid mode of living; and we fear that, for the present at least, nothing that benevolent and philanthropic foreigners can do will avail much towards the diminution of mendicancy in the empire. That Chinese beggars are happy in their way there can be no doubt, as witness some of their sayings: “Three years a beggar, who would be a king?” and “The finest rice has not charms equal to roving liberty.” Which proverbial expressions in mendicant colloquial, Mr. Moule remarks, would appear to imply that there are “jolly beggars” to be found in China as well as in the West.

TABLE TALK.

A RATHER interesting fact was given in the correspondence of one of the daily papers—namely, the speed of the various railways. By this it seems that the Great Western is the most rapid, its fastest trains running an average of fifty-three miles per hour; whilst those of the London and North Western—where the Wigan accident occurred—run only forty-three. The Great Northern stands second for speed—fifty miles; and the other great lines average forty-five.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Every MS. should bear the Name and Address of the Sender.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 301.

October 4, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XXXII.

A FEW VICTIMS.



IN Doctor D'Aulnay's room things were as usual excessively dirty and scrupulously clean; and the strip of wood nailed across formed the line of separation. A moderator burned upon the table, for the forge fire was just fading out; but it was evident that the occupant of the room had lately been busily at work, for various chemical vessels were standing about in disorder amongst broken glass and stands. Sand from

a sand-bath was overturned and scattered about; but a couple of bottles were standing full of a powder, and carefully tied over with what seemed to be soft leather.

There had evidently, too, been work going on at the lathe, where iron had been turned. There were a dozen hemispherical cups lying on the bench, of various degrees of brightness, and the floor about sparkled with dust and tiny shavings of iron, which had evidently curled off under the hard steel tool, which had treated the iron cups as if they had been some close-grained wood in the turner's hand.

But work was over, and Doctor D'Aulnay was indulging in recreation in the clean portion of his room, amongst his flowers. He had been smoking, and the ash of a couple

of cigars lay in a neat tray. He had been reading, too—a French work upon the government of nations—and the book lay open. The Doctor was evidently a thinker, and the broad margin of every page was covered with notes, written in an almost microscopic hand—original ideas of his own; and he had smiled as he added them, thinking of the regeneration of France, and the blessings he would pour down upon the land if he should ever win his way to power after blowing a few of the unworthy ones to infinitesimally small fragments by means of the ingenious shells, which were his own special invention.

But the Doctor was not reading now. He was enjoying himself in a philosophical way, for he was of opinion that time was too valuable to be wasted. He even approached the sublime in his ways of life, for even in his dreams he was busy over the regeneration of his country, and the means for improving the efficiency of his shells.

There was a wire cage upon the table where the Doctor sat, and in it a couple of sparrows, which seemed exceedingly dissatisfied with that habitation, and kept on fluttering against the bars, beating their breasts bare. In a small basket close by there was something else alive, which scratched and moved about restlessly; and on the other side—green, goggle-eyed, and passive—in a basin, partly covered by a plate of common window glass, a great frog.

The philosopher's hair was black and close as ever, and threw his white forehead, marked with thin lines, into powerful contrast. His eyes were twinkling brightly, and his white teeth were set hard upon his lower lip.

There was a small stoppered bottle upon the table; and, after sitting thinking for awhile, the Doctor took it up, removed the stopper cautiously, and then passed it rapidly beneath his nose.

It was but a momentary action, and on

the instant he snatched it away and closed the stopper.

His next act was to take up a quill pen, and sharpen the point, making it long and taper. This done, he galvanised the frog into action by taking the glass lid from the basin. Another instant, and the wide-mouthed creature had leaped out of the water, but into a cloth cunningly placed to receive it; and in a few moments the poor thing was swathed in what was to be its winding-sheet, for it was wrapped round and round until only the head was left bare, its tormentor holding it firmly in his left hand.

A little manipulation with an ivory book mark, and the mouth was opened; then the pen was dipped into the contents of the stoppered bottle, and one tiny drop dripped into the frog's mouth, which was then permitted to close.

The cloth was then unwound, and the object of the experiment allowed to fall on the table, which it did, not to leap actively about, but to fall flaccid, and with its legs outstretched, quite dead.

The Doctor smiled complacently, rose from his chair, took up the unfortunate reptile by one of its limp legs, carried it to the window, and—flip!—it was falling headlong to the hard stones far below, to be ready for the trampling hoofs of the next horse.

"Good," said D'Aulnay, smiling as he returned to the table, and prepared for his second experiment.

This was to place his hand in the cage where the sparrows fluttered; and, after a struggle, he secured one, which turned up to him its little, bead-like eyes, and panted and struggled feebly against the cruel hand. But its release was near. D'Aulnay took out the stopper from the little, wide-mouthed bottle, and in its place inserted, beak downwards, the wretched sparrow's head, watching it the while with earnest, glittering eyes.

There was just room for the bird's head, the feathers closing up the sides so that but little air could get in, and at the first inspiration there was a change; at the second, a feeble struggle; then the wings grew limp, the muscles of the neck failed to do their work, and the Doctor threw the bird upon the table, dead.

He smiled again, evidently well satisfied; and, taking up the bottle, the temptation seemed to be strong upon him to hold it to his nostrils; but he resisted the desire, and stoppered it once more; while he took the

dead sparrow to the little forge, raised a small cake of black coal dust, and dropped the tiny corpse into an incandescent hole.

It was now the turn of the next sparrow, whose fluttering was being watched by a cat which now showed itself, crouching close to one of the windows; but which had evidently, from its shrinking ways, been too well taught to allow of its making any piratical raids upon its master's property. It looked very eager and hungry, though, as it saw the second sparrow caught; and, schooled as it was, it could not refrain from giving a dismal "miouw!" and licking its thin gums while gazing with dilated eyes; but it made not so much as a pace forward, but rather shrank back ~~more into the shade, for~~ the light upon the table left much of the room in darkness.

D'Aulnay smiled grimly as he watched the cat, and held in his hand the sparrow, which, as if dreading the worst, made a resolute stand for its life, ~~but~~ ~~uttering~~, scratching with its claws, and digging its little hard beak furiously into its captor's hand, upon which it left red marks.

"Lie still, little beast!" said D'Aulnay, smiling as he took up a large needle, removed the stopper, plunged the needle twice in the liquid, and then, laying aside the feathers upon the poor bird's breast, punctured it once in the fleshy part, carefully avoiding the piercing of any vital organ.

Then, closing the bottle once more, and still holding the sparrow in his hand, he walked again to the furnace, and dropped the needle into the burning coal.

By the time he had reached the table again the bird lay passive, with its little eyes half closed—quite dead.

"Here, puss!" he said, with a malicious look upon his grim face; and he threw the bird on the floor, to be seized by the cat, which retreated, growling and spitting, into a corner, but only to be driven out by the Doctor.

"Go there—under the furnace, beast!" he said. "No feathers here."

The cat evidently had a warm lurking-place in the indicated spot, and rushed there with flashing, dilated eyes, evidently in an agony of dread lest she should be deprived of her *bonne bouche*.

But D'Aulnay had no intention of interfering with her repast; for as soon as she had disappeared he once more returned to the table, taking with him a small piece of

bright red carrot. This he set to and prepared by dipping the quill pen as before into the bottle, and then piercing the piece of carrot three or four times.

This done, he burnt the quill; and, opening the basket, took out a pretty little white rabbit by its ears, the tame little animal settling down upon the table instantly, and suffering itself to be patted and stroked while it busily munched the carrot to the last bit, when it set up its ears, shook its head, tore at its nose with its fore paws for a few moments, then gave a feeble squeak, set off as if to run, and rolled over on its side, dead.

"Good!" said the Doctor, who had been intently watching his experiment, rubbing his hands. "It is excellent—marvellous! What a power! For the enemies of La France that cannot be reached with shells. Let me see," he said, grimly, and counting upon his fingers; "by direct action; by inhalation; by puncture; by indirect action—Ah! what is this?"

He was startled by a wild yell from the unfortunate cat, another victim, though not intended; for she now rushed from the hole beneath the furnace, careered furiously round the room, and in another instant would have been amongst the bottles.

The Doctor turned ghastly, crouched like a wild beast, and seemed as if about at all hazards to leap from the window; for he knew the effect of a breakage amongst his deadly preparations. But he was safe; for as the cat gathered itself up for a spring which would have landed her amongst the receptacles of the *poudre d'enfer*, her muscles relaxed, and with a dismal moan she fell prone—dead.

"Ah!" said the Doctor, smiling, and drawing a longer breath, as he wiped the dew from his forehead. "Ah—yes—decidedly by indirect action; one that cannot be touched by water."

Then he stood thoughtfully nodding his head for a few moments before glancing at his watch.

"Ah!" he exclaimed; "so late! They will be here."

Hurriedly putting away the bottle, he next thrust open the window, seized the cat by the tail, gave it a good swing, and sent his victim far away into the street, listening till he heard it come down with a dull thud.

"No one will eat that," he said, grimly;

"and the sweepers will soon take it away, unless some one takes it up for the skin: if so, let him beware. But that is his affair, not mine. Now for the rabbit."

This shared the fate of one sparrow; for, making a hole in the black cake of coal, the little white animal was thrust into its fiery grave, and a shovel of coal dust being added, the working of the bellows for a few minutes calcined the ill-fated little animal; and the Doctor washed his hands.

"What a beautifully clean thing is fire," he said, softly. "So is water," he added, after a pause. "Ah, here come my friends. Vive la France!"

Steps were heard upon the stairs; and, throwing open the door, he held up the lamp to light the way for Hippolyte Lalande and Lemaire, who came in with another man, who was saluted by the Doctor as Fevre.

"It is time, I suppose?" said D'Aulnay, interrogatively.

Lemaire nodded.

"You have no doubts?" said D'Aulnay.

"Ask the others," said Lemaire. "You think me partial."

The Doctor turned to Lalande.

"Not a doubt," said the latter. "But come and judge for yourself."

"And you?" said the Doctor, turning to the newcomer.

"Come and see," said Fevre. "I have no doubts."

"And that English milord who was in France?"

"He is a fool," said Lalande; "but his wife is with them, and leads the husband too. He has influence, and if steps are not taken to frighten them we shall even be hunted from here. The police are very watchful already. It is evident that something is on the way."

"Then we must strike the first blow," said D'Aulnay, fiercely. "It is for La France."

"Yes; for La France," said the others, excepting Lemaire, who remained silent.

"And those English in Grosvenor-square?" said Fevre.

"One at a time," said D'Aulnay. "There are ways and ways of striking. The secret is to be cautious, and not to try too much at once."

"You have reason," said Lalande; "and now, gentlemen, are you ready?"

Lemaire's response was to begin covering

the lower part of his face so as to form a disguise.

"You are silent, Monsieur Lemaire," said D'Aulnay.

"I am a suspect," said the former, meaningly. "You say I have enmity, and work for my own aims. Perhaps so. Anyhow, I am with you in this expedition."

"Good," said D'Aulnay, laying his hand upon the lamp after assuming his hat; "and now, gentlemen, are you ready?"

"Yes," was the reply, as with one voice.

And they stole softly out of the room, closely followed by D'Aulnay, who only paused to turn down the lamp, and then to lock and transfer to his pocket the key of his door.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FULL OF DOUBT.

TWO hours' hard walking to and fro upon the green sward in Hyde Park hardly sufficed to cool down the first ebullitions of the Frenchman's anger. He had torn his hair, stamped and gesticulated until he had attracted the attention of a policeman, who had come up and surlily announced that "they had had enough of that," and advised him to move on.

So Rivière strode hastily away to another part of the park, where he recommenced his angry striding up and down. He would have satisfaction, that he would. There should be a meeting. The baronet's had been a most gross insult, and he should encounter him. Yes, he was a gentleman. His faith, that such a gross, rough boor should be a gentleman! He should meet him. He would tell him that he had cruelly maligned Lady Lawler. No, he would not tell him that. Lady Lawler was a woman who could fight her own battles, and she would teach him to dare to make aspersions on her character. A cur—a pig! How dare he indulge in his base suspicions?

Rivière smiled grimly as he thought of Lady Lawler's spirit, and the power she possessed over her husband. Sir Richard would not dare to meet him; he would not be allowed, but he would have to make an humble apology. Yes, it would be sent him in the morning, with a request from Lady Lawler that he would return.

The baronet must have been drunk—mad with losses, or something. Yes, Lady Lawler would be writing; but Marie must not see the letter, or she would learn where

his lessons were given. But did she know now?

He was cooling down fast. He would accept the apology for Marie's sake; but he could go to Grosvenor-square no more, and he must seek in earnest now for other pupils.

First, to return home. Was he sufficiently calm? He thought so now; and he walked slowly along, down street after street, to soothe the irritation of his feelings.

A glance or two in different shop windows had shown him that the only visible traces of his past encounter were the starting veins in his temples, and by degrees these beat less furiously. And now he began to ponder about sending a friend to wait upon the baronet. It was awkward; for he had no friends now. But he must find some one who would be his second. It would doubtless be easy, for there were plenty in Soho who would support the honour of La France.

Suppose he fell! What would become of Marie? And, on the other hand, suppose he killed the Englishman, how could he face again his gentle, confiding wife? But his honour—he had been struck. There was no evasion—the Englishman must apologize.

With these musings flitting through his brain, Rivière's pace grew more rapid, and he avoided the wayfarers as if by instinct, seeing nothing till, crossing Wardour-street and entering Soho-square by a narrow dingy way, he became aware once more of the figure which he supposed to be Lemaire's issuing from the street where his own lodging was situated.

He started at once in pursuit, determined to examine well the features of this cause of uneasiness; but, before he could reach him, he saw him turn a corner, and by the time Rivière reached that he was gone—had entered, perhaps, one of the thirty or forty houses with open doors on either side—perhaps passed on; who could say?

Rivière's brow knit, and the veins began to start out once more by his temples, as a shiver of dread and jealousy swept through him; and in spite of himself he began to make comparisons between himself and Sir Richard, and he thought at last of what would have been his own feelings had he returned home and been witness of such a scene as had met the baronet's eye.

"But I am a fool," he muttered, as he

wiped the dew from his forehead. "I will be open and plain with Marie; and as for her, poor child, she would not receive a visitor without telling me. No, no—she is too ingenuous, too pure."

Nevertheless, his first question upon entering the room where Madame Rivière was at work took this form—

"Has any one been?"

"Been—here? No," said Marie, glancing sharply at him. "Why do you ask?"

"Because—I fancied some one might have called."

Husband and wife were not at one, for the same thought was in each breast—

"Why should anything be kept back?"

Marie sat working and watching her husband furtively for some time; while he, rejecting the frugal meal prepared for him amidst temptations he did not suspect, sat with his head resting on his hand, moody and thoughtful, as he passed before him in array his day's adventures.

About this meeting. That was the question—how was it to be brought about? He must find a friend. It must be at one of the cafés; but it was hard to know in whom to confide. Anyhow, the matter must be gone about carefully, or else this Englishman might take advantage of his country's customs and hand him over to the police, charging him with attempting to break the peace, and binding him over in sums of money and sureties. What complications would this produce, for to whom could he fly to be his bondsmen?

Yes—he knew enough of English habits and customs to feel that he was right here, and that the task must be delicately adventured upon; so he determined to sleep upon it.

The next day found him as hot as ever against Sir Richard; and going to a neighbouring café, from which he dated the mis-sive, he sent the baronet a fiercely indited letter, inviting him to give the name of a friend.

That day, after his letter was sent, he spent going from café to café and estaminet about Soho, attentively watching the various faces of the inmates, till first one and then another would slowly rise and leave the place.

This took place several times, but Rivière did not notice it, for his mind was bent upon one object—to find a compatriot, a gentle-

man, who would be his second in the coming encounter.

Quite late at night he sat at the café where he had written his note, almost alone; for, still unperceived by Rivière, his presence had had the same strange effect: first one and then another habitué had turned, and seen him watching his countenance, and becoming uneasy had risen and left the place, till the garçon had ejaculated as he removed half-finished cups of coffee, and gathered together the loose dominoes lying upon the little marble tables. Such behaviour was unaccountable.

It was too soon, perhaps, to expect a reply—that night, it was the very earliest season; so after staying quite late, he rose and left the café, not hearing the exclamation of the garçon, who, used to very quiet and careful customers as he was, found Rivière an exception.

"Four hours, and only one cup of coffee!" he muttered, raising his hands.

Then, strolling slowly towards the door, he stood looking after Rivière, to become the next moment all animation, for a man passed him closely, gave him a meaning look, and laid one finger on his lips.

"Aha!" he said softly. "What means this?"

He gazed down the gaslit street, and saw Rivière slowly walking on the other side. Gazing attentively, he could make out that there was a man about ten paces in front, another about as far behind, and two on the other side of the road—the latter of whom was the one who had laid his finger upon his lips.

He stood watching them for about a couple of minutes, when the last figure became indistinct, as it passed a lamp-post far down the street. Then he stooped lower, and stood with one hand over his ear, listening attentively.

"What is it, Jules?" said a voice at his side; and he turned to face his proprietor, at whom he gazed meaningly.

"Listen, we shall hear something."

"A spy?" whispered the proprietor, interrogatively.

"My faith, yes, I think so. Ah, cursed brigand!" he exclaimed, shaking his fist at the driver of a cab, who urged his horse with a great deal of rattle and noise down the narrow street.

"There are the police, too," whispered the proprietor. "It will not be to-night."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

RIVIERE, meanwhile, had sauntered slowly along the street, perfectly unaware of the fact that he was the object of so much attention, and that, irrespective of his own suspicious behaviour in going into the haunts of and watching men who were for the most part proscribed and leagued together in plots against the ruling powers of their own country, he had a powerful enemy at work against him. In fact, for days past he had never left his home unwatched; but it had been performed in so quiet and careful a way that he was in the most profound ignorance of the fact. Even had his mind been less occupied by thoughts of Lemaire and Sir Richard Lawler, it is doubtful whether he would have perceived it, so cleverly had it been managed.

Doubts had been felt by more than one at first, for Lemaire was not popular amongst them, and it was guessed that he was working for his own ends; but, unfortunately for Rivière, his later acts swept away all doubts. It was only too evident that he was a spy—a clumsy and a bungling spy, working for the Louis Philippe Government; and at more than one conference it had been decided that, with the plans they had on hand, a spy could not be tolerated in their midst.

As Rivière sauntered along, it almost seemed as if he were inviting molestation; or was he so well armed that he could set those who followed him at defiance? He must have friends within call.

Were things shaping themselves to work ill for Louis Rivière? It never rains but it pours, says the old proverb. He must either be inadvertently doing everything possible to increase suspicion into something beyond doubt, or else be really a spy; for now he stopped in front of another café, and, raising himself on tiptoe, peered over the blind, and gazed into the almost empty room.

As he gazed in, the man on the opposite side of the street walked a dozen yards past the lamp-post and crossed over. The others, too, drew nearer, and were all now pretty close; but Rivière did not heed them. He stepped back to the pavement and walked slowly on, muttering—

"He is not there."

Then he stopped for a moment, as if undecided, ending by walking on pretty sharply

now, though the next street was that where his apartments were.

He had nearly reached the door, unaware of the fact that a shawl-draped form was leaning, anxiously watching, from an upper window, when a man before him stopped, hesitated, and then turned to and addressed him in French.

"Would monsieur direct him to Philippe-street?"

"Certainly. It was the second turning to the right, then the third to the left, and again the second to the right."

But, his faith, he was confused. He was strange in the dreadful wilderness of a London—so different to dear Paris. He had wandered and lost himself. If monsieur would accept a cigar, and show him.

Rivière hesitated instinctively for a few moments. He knew not why, but it was as if some internal monitor had whispered "Take care!" Then laughing to himself, he took the proffered cigar with a few words of thanks, lit it from that of the stranger—the two men, as they stood face to face, puffing at the small rolls of tobacco, lighting up in flashes each the other's face; and as Rivière glanced for a moment in the other's eyes, he again felt the same instinctive feeling of shrinking dread.

He shook it off, though, the next moment, saying—

"I am at monsieur's service. It is pleasant to aid a compatriot on these sombre shores."

"Ah, yes—sombre shores indeed," said the other, walking side by side with Rivière. "The place is sad—so sad! One never feels joyous here—one rarely smiles. How do these islanders live? What streets! Look at this: how gloomy! No boulevards—no little tables where one can sit and sip one's eau sucrée or black coffee. No places where one can have a petit verre. Nought but great public-houses, where the barbarians drink beer from great metal pots, and fearful women drink gin—what they call blue ruin. It is a fearful place!"

"This turning," said Rivière, who listened while his companion volubly chattered on.

He would have turned back and left the stranger to find his own way, only it seemed absurd; and, besides, had he not accepted his cigar? What was there to mind? This man could have no connection with Lemaire. His troubles were turning his brain.

All the same, though, as the stranger chattered away, Rivière noticed now for the

first time that a man was walking a few paces in front, and that he took, as if intuitively, precisely the same route as that they themselves pursued.

"Let him," laughed Rivière to himself. "What matters? I have neither money nor watch. But, stay!"

He shivered, for it suddenly occurred to him that it might be possible that the French police had emissaries even in London. But he pooh-poohed it the next moment, and answered a question from his new-found friend.

"Were there good theatres in London?"

"Oh, yes, he believed so; but he had not seen much of them. This turning."

What turns—what a maze! He was monsieur's debtor for ever. He would never have found his way alone; but have had to pass the night walking up and down those deplorable, dingy streets, every one of which was enough to give any one the spleen.

But he might have asked the police—there is one.

To be sure, yes. What folly! The police would have helped him, of course. What, another turn?

Yes, another turn; and, as they took it, Rivière glanced sharply round, to see that the policeman they had passed had done precisely the same thing, and was watching them. He saw more—namely, that two men were a short distance behind. Then, going on, he saw the other man was in front.

Another street, the stranger still chattering in the most lively way; and now Rivière glanced back once more. There were the two men behind, and there was one in front. But they had only another street to go down, and there was Philip-street.

The long rows of houses looked very dark and dingy, with only a light here and there at very wide distances; for the hour was late. The gas lamps stood at the customary stations; but they only blinked dimly, and shed but little light. There was a cold chill in the air, it seemed to Rivière, and he was anxious to get away and hurry home; but he would see it through now. And besides, what of those other men who followed them? Bah! it was childish. He was nervous and unhunged.

He glanced round once more.

"Is anything wrong that you look back?" said the stranger.

"I don't like those men following us," said Rivière, in a low voice.

"Mon Dieu! but I hope there is no

danger," said the stranger, catching at Rivière's arm. "Shall we go back to the police?"

"Oh, no," said Rivière, smiling, "it was perhaps only a silly suspicion; and besides, you are safe—we are here."

"Ah, yes, it is good. This is Philip-street, and my house—my lodgment is—my faith, which is it? How different it is by night. Is monsieur sure, though, that this is Philip-street?"

"Yes, and make haste," said Rivière, in low, sharp tones. "Which is your number? These men are closing in upon us."

"Heavens, what a position!" exclaimed the stranger, speaking in short, husky tones. "But, yes," he exclaimed, joyfully, "I had forgotten the number, but that is the house. I know it by that head over the door. It is good—we now have refuge if those men mean us wrong. We are here."

It was a dark street of the region of dark streets, and by the flickering gaslights looked unusually forbidding. Late as was the hour, several doors, whose posts were ornamented with an abundant crop of bell handles, stood open. It was at one of these that the stranger halted.

"Thank Heaven!" he exclaimed; "but those men! It looks very suspicious; they have evidently some design. Ah, this London!"

Rivière saw, too, on the instant that these four men evidently had some design; for as he stood in front of the open door, with his hand raised to his hat, he saw the first man stop short and turn round, and the others closing up.

Yes, there was some design in this; and Rivière's hands clenched: so did his teeth, biting right through the cigar, the lighted portion of which fell to the ground.

"I see what to do," whispered the stranger. "I am safe, but I cannot leave you to your fate. You will come in with me—to my room—till they have gone by; or you can watch from the window for a police, and he will see you home. To be sure, come in."

There seemed to be nothing else to do, always supposing that these silent men, closing in so quickly now, had inimical ideas. Unless, indeed, he should determine to dash through them, and run until a policeman came in sight. It was a strange position—in busy London, too; but the streets were deserted, and Rivière had not many moments for choice. He saw on the instant that

which his companion whispered, laying a hand upon his arm—

"Here, quick; it is your only chance—they are thieves, and are after you. In, quick, and I will bang to the door."

The decoy bird had done his part well, and without a suspicion Rivière took his first step into the dark passage. Ere he took the second, he knew that he had been betrayed.

It was but the work of a few seconds. As he darted in, he felt himself seized, and his arms pinned to his side. A cry was at his lips, when something thick was over his head, and he felt that he was being dragged down by many hands. He could hear hard breathing and trampling feet, and the boards creaked as he struggled fiercely for his liberty—for aught he knew, for his life. Then a sharp cry seemed to pierce the air, sounding muffled and strange though; and it seemed to him that the cry was his—that he had uttered it in his despair. Then all seemed misty and strange, his head swam, he felt sick and giddy, and he knew no more.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AT A BULB SALE.

IT really is terrible work, and there can be no doubt about it; everything is a great deal dearer than it was twenty years ago—even life, in spite of what people say about this vale of tears.

But I am not talking about life, but about my garden, which gets ruinous in its extravagance. Years ago, one used to spend a few pence or shillings in seeds, and the garden was gay. Nowadays, it must be fashionable; and the amount it has cost for bedding plants this year is something that means cheques; while now, the winter season is coming on, and I must buy bulbs.

Of course I go to Stevens's, and, after mingling with the crowd, get into difficulties. I first glance round the long room, packed with plants, shrubs, trees, packets and people. I don't mind the people: I've seen people before everywhere—these very people, it seems to me. I know I've seen that dirty-looking fellow, with "knock-out" written in every line of his countenance, at half a dozen sales; and that portly man in black, rubbing his nose with the seal end of a silver pencil case, you see him everywhere, as you do that man who marks the price every lot fetches in his catalogue. People are a nuisance at sales, especially brokers, and I

would rather classify them as parties I did not wish to meet.

As for the plants: well, no, I don't want any plants; let them be knocked down—without breaking the pots—a score of times. And the shrubs, evergreens mostly, I want none of them—neither deodora, nor spruce, nor red cedar, nor laurel: they may one and all go to the nurserymen or people with new suburban semi-detached villas. I don't wish to bid for rose trees either, nor fruit trees, plums, peaches, and apricots; let them sell. Neither do I wish for gooseberry bushes, of which there is a stack, even though the porter will persist in brushing my hat and combing my hair with a bundle every time he takes them up to the table for sale, till I indignantly change my position, and find that I am backing into a brake of raspberry canes, and even these have thorns—spiteful, cruel thorns, that go in and won't come out.

I am grumbling, because I came to bid for bulbs, and these are not bulbous; and I do not want to bid for any of that Japanese primula seed, which sold last year at the rate of thirty-two guineas per ounce. I want bulbs; and at last behold them, in their brown paper bags, heaps and piles of them. There is a buzzing now amongst the assembled crowd, for there are many amateurs here—men who make their garden a resource, a place where they can go and wander, and forget the care and worry of the grindstone of life; where they can smile benignly as they seek out from his floral resting place a great fat snail, and scrunch him on the gravel walk; where they can feel their senses soothed into repose as they smoke out those cunning earwigs which dodge in amongst the petals of the favourite dahlia, or poke out slugs with a rough-ended stick, or pick out caterpillars, and then see the garden grow. They are all here: the men who pride themselves on their pot plants—I mean plants for the pot—and those who glory in prize blossoms, and grow them in leading strings, with watchful care.

The party, though, to-day is principally bulbous; and as a porter hurries up with a couple of brown paper bags—consigned from Holland, most likely—unties one and empties half its contents upon the long table, you see a type of the buyer in that plump, well-dressed man, who perches a pair of gold-rimmed eyeglasses astraddle upon his ruddy nose, and turns over the bulbs, picks them up and examines them keenly, smells them,

and replaces them amongst the litter of black rape-seed husk in which they were packed.

I know his thoughts as well as if he spoke them. He is suspicious, and peering about to see if he can detect mould or worm that shall have destroyed the vitality of these little vegetable flower boxes—for such they really are, these gladiolus bulbs; and in them, fitted snugly away, so small and neat, and wonderfully, are the embryo plants that, under favourable circumstances, shall blossom forth with a blaze of glowing hues—purple and white, and crimson and scarlet, and violet, and flowers that are variegated and striped à merveille.

There is a little sharp competition, and it is evident that the buyer thinks he has obtained a bargain, for he smiles and shows them to a friend, and—Oh, that is it! He and friend are joining in the lot, and share them. That is their only purchase, and one thinks that their gardens are small, very close to London, invaded by cats, troubled with blacks, and liable to have their flowers beaten down when rising skyward in their glory. For are there not four sockets at as many corners of the gravel walk, and do not posts appear in those sockets—green posts—on certain days, posts with pegged heads, supporting outstretched lines, from which the clean clothes fill, and flap, and crackle in the wind? Ah, washing days are no friends to floriculture, as many a grower knows.

The gladioli sell well, bag after bag, for, in spite of sharp inspection, inimical worm and damp seem far away, and the buyers' faces glow in anticipation of the bright hues that will next year deck their beds.

Now we have a fresh variety of packet. No Hollandish bulbs these, like the hyacinths in the catalogue, but Japanese; though perhaps, after all, it was only the ancestral bud that came from those far-off isles, where the nurseryman's trade has been for ages made a science, and these packets which we see have been grown for sale by some careful nurseryman, English or Continental; though it is, I believe, an acknowledged fact that a great many of the bulbs sold here are of Dutch growth—products of the land where men made themselves maniacs over the tulip, and gave such large sums for a single bulb.

These Japanese lilies fetch their price, for the golden lily is fashionable. *Lilium auratum* reigns at present; but its gorgeous brethren fetch their price: the black and orange tigers, and the sweet, pure white—that blossom that

has been immortalized in a hundred pictures of the Annunciation, by the old masters and their copyists, and placed by them in the hands of their angels. Who could think, though, as bag after bag of the bulbs is knocked down by the auctioneer, that those grubby-looking lumps would send up those great green leaf-bearing shafts, to be crowned with the silvery lilies, dusted with golden pollen, and shedding so sweet a fragrance around? But so it is; and condensed in these bulbs are ineffable sweetness and light—enough to satisfy Mr. Matthew Arnold.

Here is another change—hyacinths; and bag after bag of what look to be onions is thrown upon the table. Regularly-shaped bulbs are these, with their purple or brown skins, peeping threads of roots, and long green shoot forcing its way up in growth, so eager is it to escape from its close confinement. Plenty of purchasers for these. Here join in a class of buyers who have no gardens proper, but who turn the window sill and sash into a conservatory, and regularly every winter make gay the window, with a crop of coloured water glasses in which the bulbs they now buy shall be grown, to send down in the clear water those white root filaments, and up into the warm air of the room, spear after spear of green leaves, with, at last, a bud-laden shaft that shall blossom out in pink, white, or pale blue sweet-scented flowers—Flora's sweetest. From Haarlem these, and honoured with noble names of the great.

Hyacinths, hyacinths, hyacinths—will they never end? Bag after bag, some of each lot to be thrown upon the table where the heap of black rape husk grows more literary each minute. And yet there are buyers for them as fast as they are brought forward—enough, one might think, to deck half the windows in London. Then a fresh kind of bulb. What, little medlars? No; tiny onions! They might be anything, these little brown, flattened, buttony bulbs; but they are the golden crocus, that hardy little blossom which peers out looking as if the sun had showered down flashes of his setting hue upon the soddened black earth of early spring. Bright little blossoms and cheery; for their warm hue seems even to comfort their neighbour, the shivering little snowdrop. More of them, and more—bushels sold, with a noise that recalls fat Henry VIII. and his meeting with Francis at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Purple, too, and white, tiny gem caskets, each of

which shall send forth its long, dark, grassy leaves, perhaps through the snow of the coming spring.

I have bought all I want—nay, not all; I want all my conscience will let me purchase—and still the brown paper bags come, are opened, and are sold: bulbs from Holland, from the Cape, and from Japan, some of a most experimental character, and others that shall blossom well. I will away—but stop, I must have a few tulips for that central bed; they will be off before the bedding plants come in.

Surely fifty people have thought just the same, and now begin to bid merrily as the tulips come on the board. Here they are; rich brown onions, or shalot-like bulbs. That plump man, with the glasses astride his nose, bids frantically for them, and drives me nearly mad with the way he snatches lots out of my hands with his greedy bids. It is all very well for the auctioneer to smile deferentially at him; that does not improve my case, nor help to fill that special bed.

Better luck now, though. The plump man is getting satiated. He must have bought a barrowful, the long-pursed rascal. He has left enough though, and to spare, for all of us; and we buy, and buy, and buy, till even the auctioneer grows hoarse, and tries to introduce a number of lots of wall-fruit trees by way of diversion. But no, we are in for bulbs; and bulbs are brought forward again in place of the bidless fruit trees.

For we like the tulip bulbs, they are so suggestive. Only dingy brown now; but there is magic in them, and as they pass under the auctioneer's hammer, it is impossible to help seeing a bed, or a window-box full of gorgeous, nodding cups, balanced on their long stems, which rise from the green leafy spears—chalices of golden yellow, and crimson, and white; and as the mind will dwell upon their beauty for months to come, here in this dingy, foggy room, dark with breath, with the sloppy London streets outside, and everything wet, and cold, and black, and depressing, the hum resolves itself into that of some golden-banded wandering bee, busy amongst flowers, each one of which seems straining towards the bright blue skies, whose morn or noon, or evening lines, it reflects.

Even I grow satiated at last, and turn to give another glance round at my neighbours, who have largely increased. My position in the cane brake has grown so uncomfort-

able, that I change and get into a gooseberry clump, which is far worse; and the moss rose cluster is not better. I am shaded at last, though, amongst some leafy evergreens, and patiently watch the eager buyers, each with a happy air of peace in his face—the Adamic aspect bequeathed to all gardeners by their great father. And placid and peaceful are these faces. There are certainly lines of care; but they are, as a rule, only such cares as a nibbling wasp or a vexatious aphid might produce. There is a watchful softness, too, as of one who waits for the development of buds and fulfilment of blossoms—a look seen nowhere else, and which sets one gazing in the glass at home to see if it is there, where it is not; for at last, laden with floral booty enough to necessitate a cab, I tear myself away, the last sound I hear being, "Five and six for this last bag of Van Tholl." Tap! The hammer is down.

ME AND MY DOGS.

FAN.

IT seems at first sight no such huge insult, after all, to be called "dog of an unbeliever" by a Turk; but to thoroughly appreciate the opprobriousness of the term, it is necessary to see the canine pests of Constantinople and other towns of the East—the long, lean, villainous-looking, ragged scavengers of the streets, who prowl about in bands, to the terror of strangers; while even with the latitude they possess theirs seems not to be the happiest of lives. Pleasant beasts, too, must have been the Esquimaux dogs of Dr. Hayes, used in his Polar expedition; hungry savages that would devour anything, from one another down to the leather harness used to attach them to the sledge.

Thorough cosmopolitans indeed are dogs, and it would be a hard matter, I opine, to find a spot upon the earth where dogs are not; though for real love of the canine race, I suppose the palm must be awarded to the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, since they class it as a luxury amongst their animals good for food.

One dog I knew of the softer sex bore the not uncommon name of Fan. She was of the terrier breed, and of the orthodox black and tan colour, with large, expressive eyes, carefully trimmed ears, and legs of so fragile a construction that she was always lifted from chairs to the floor, lest she should snap

her supporters in leaping. A shiny, yelping, whining little wretch, never happy unless it was being nursed and cuddled up in some woman's lap, where it would make itself a bed, and snarl at every caressing hand held out in order to stroke or pat its sleek skin.

Like most of her sex, she had her likes and dislikes, lavishing her sweets upon the former, her bites and bitters upon the latter. If in favour, you were leaped upon, nestled in, had your boots dirtied, and were thoroughly flea-ed; while if you were disliked, barks, snarls, and bites were your portion—snarls and barks that were a nuisance, and bites that were mere trifles, for the little thing had not sufficient power of jaw to do mischief.

She was extremely small—a sort of wire-drawn dog, that might have been nurtured upon gin, to stop her growth and produce the delicacy of constitution which caused her to stick up her coat and shiver so miserably in cold weather, till her mistress took compassion upon her and gave her a warm berth.

There was one thing in her favour, though—I speak of the dog—her miniature size; for it is no exaggeration to say that she could be easily carried in the coat-pocket, though I never tried the experiment, nor even felt the slightest desire in that direction.

It may not be generally known—in fact, I feel assured that Mr. Timbs has not mentioned it—but, as a rule, ladies who pet dogs are inordinately fond of tea, strong tea—a spoonful apiece and one for the pot: caddy spoons, mind, and not the abominable little egg scoopers used by our ancestors. And this was the case with Mrs. St. Clair, the mistress of Fan; so that go when you would to call upon her there was always a cup of tea to be had.

She took tea to cool her in summer, and to warm her in winter; to calm her nerves if she was hysterical, and as a mild stimulant when low; for lunch, for a half-way beverage between that and dinner, and, as a matter of course, afterwards; so that no wonder will be excited when I state that I called in one evening to find the tea on the way, and consented to take a cup, being myself somewhat of an old woman over the pleasant infusion.

Friend St. Clair was standing, tea-cup in hand, with his arm resting gracefully upon the bead-worked velvet mantelshelf cover,

and arranging his hair with the disengaged hand, as he discoursed to me upon the topic of the day. Mrs. St. Clair—who abjures urns—had poured out a cup, and then refilled the little china pot from the plump, bright copper kettle on the hob; and then, having rather overdone it, she contrived to pour a goodly portion of the scalding fluid upon Fan's back, as she lay curled up upon the hearth-rug; when, with a yell of rage and pain, the little fury leaped, and with one bound fastened upon her master's leg, worrying it to the best of her small ability, and—after her fashion—accusing him of inflicting the torture she suffered. Comfort, cold cream, goose grease, wadding, and bandages were applied, and everything possible called into requisition to allay the pain, but all by its mistress's hand, for the little wretch turned quite frantic whenever her master approached, biting viciously; while to the day of her death she never forgot that scald, but in the most sincere manner declared herself the enemy of the master of the house. He tried coaxing, petting, threats, blows—very light ones, though; for she was as fragile as so much glass, or china, or as a flower, her mistress said—but nothing was of any avail. St. Clair was close at hand when the pain came, and therefore the dog's reason told her he must have been the inflictor; and he was never forgiven.

Mrs. St. Clair must have quite considered her pet in the light of a flower, for it was allowed at its own good pleasure to grace her table and trip where it pleased amongst the edibles. The effect was pretty, certainly; while, when Fan raised her little delicate paw, tapped a lump of sugar off the glass, and then crunched it up, her mistress was in ecstasies. But when sardines, or ham slices, or chicken cold was daintily sniffed at and touched, I must confess to having been too particular, and of too squeamish a nature to care to play second fiddle to Fan's first.

Of course it was very ridiculous, though every one has his or her failings; but in spite of the example set me by both master and mistress, I always confined myself to tea, without either sugar or the cream with which Fan would whiten the tip of her little black nose.

"How abstemious you are," St. Clair would say. "You reading men almost starve yourselves."

But how I used to make up for it when I

reached home, and could feel that every morsel I devoured was not doggy; so strong was my prejudice against the innocent little pet, thought worthy though it was of a plated collar and three little bells.

Fan was a thoroughly genteel dog, and scorned the company of the animal world, smelling strangers with a curious distrust, and evidently regarding them in the same spirit that we should a novel importation caged for our inspection at the Regent's Park gardens. There was no sociability, no friendliness displayed; for after a certain amount of examination, Fan would set up her back, and go slowly to her basket, snarling as she went, and then refuse to come forth again until the visitor had departed.

Born under the influence of a lucky planet was Fan; for if it be the nearest approach to happiness upon this earth to be well fed, sheltered, and warmed, Fan must have been happy, since in addition to the above luxuries she enjoyed one to which few of us, married or single, ever attain—namely, that of doing just as she liked. And yet she never seemed to be a contented animal, but whined and shivered, and looked rough and deplorable in cold weather, wearing her woollen robe, made by her mistress, in a strange, half-ashamed way which prompted her to droop her tail, and shudder all over.

But Fan's career was cut short, literally curtailed; and one day she went the way of all pet dogs—Fan was missing, and offered rewards produced no effect. A second day passed, and then a third, and still there was sorrow in the pleasant suburb of Highgate; but on the evening of the third day came news home in the square, closed conveyance of the London Parcels Delivery Company: basket for Mrs. St. Clair, sixpence to pay.

"Game, decidedly," said Mr. St. Clair, cutting the strings, after vainly looking for tokens of the basket having travelled far by rail. "I wonder who sent it?" and he raised the straw it contained.

There was a shriek from Mrs. St. Clair, followed up by half a dozen more shrill, sharp, piercing cries, upon seeing the tailless form of her "dear, darling, tiddy ickle sing" reposing in the straw; while from the collar hung a label bearing the words, "To be continued in our next."

"Who is our base and cruel enemy?" ejaculated St. Clair, furiously.

And when I entered their abode that

night, I feel sure that they suspected me; but I was innocent, innocent as I was of sending that second parcel received at Hilly Villa—a brown paper packet, containing, in a vast number of wraps, the tail of the unfortunate Fan, tied up with blue satin ribbon, while a cut paper leg-of-mutton-shank frill concealed the gory stump.

It was a cruel trick; for Mrs. St. Clair loved her dog, and bitterly felt its loss.

"I have no children," she exclaimed, plaintively, "and I must have something to love."

St. Clair was standing meditatively by the fire, and though he heard her words, they had no effect upon him—he did not even sigh; and I suppose husband and wife understood one another.

In after-years, when time had soothed the sorrows of Fan's mistress, I learned from a friend, one Thomas Phipps, the whole truth; in fact, he owned to having cut off the tail and sent the two parcels.

"I saw the little beggar run over, sir, and the thought popped into my head all at once. Gave a boy sixpence to carry it home, for it was dead as dead."

"But why hurt the poor woman's feelings?" I said.

"Serve her right," he said, rudely. "No business to have a dog to make such a fool of. You never stayed there a week, and had everything tasted for you by that little wretch. Why, I should have been starved outright if it hadn't been for Paddy Green's chops and mealies. Hurt her feelings, indeed! Why, I declare that I gave myself no end of moral pats on the back because I behaved so well, and did not poison the little wretch when I was there."

"But it was weak and pitiful," I said, sternly. "Petty revenge is always contemptible."

"I don't care," said Tom—"perhaps it is, perhaps it isn't; but I know one thing, and that is, I never felt so much satisfaction in my life as when I cut that dog a tail shorter. You never suffered from her as I did."

"Pooh!" I said, "I've had my share; but I should always have tried to protect the little animal."

"Why?" said Tom.

"Why? Because of the theory of the old lady, who always prayed for long life to the tyrant who had killed half her family, for fear a worse might come."

A CENTURY AGO.

"A LETTER from Weymouth, dated the 1st instant, says: 'Last Friday evening, between the hours of eight and nine, several ruffians broke into the house of the widow Crossman, of this town, and barbarously murdered and hacked several of the lodgers—in particular a razor grinder, two weavers, and two priests, and did a great deal of mischief in the said house. Diligent search is making after the perpetrators of this horrid deed.'"

"We hear that Morgan, the famous highwayman, who made his escape out of Newgate, is now under confinement in Dunkirk Gaol."

"This day a grazier was robbed near Tyburn Turnpike of upwards of two hundred pounds in notes and cash, by a single highwayman."

"On Monday night last, about eleven o'clock, as Mr. Higbee, an officer in his Majesty's excise, was going home from his duty, he was attacked at the back door of the Greyhound Inn, in the Borough, by three villains, from whom he defended himself, but had the misfortune to break both his legs. He was immediately carried to St. Thomas's Hospital, where it is feared he must undergo an amputation, the fracture being so violently bad."

"Tuesday morning, between seven and eight o'clock, as one Mr. Godfrey, a substantial farmer in Berkshire, was coming to London, he was attacked, near the twelve-mile stone upon Hounslow Heath, by a single highwayman, genteelly dressed and well mounted, who robbed him of nineteen guineas, two thirty-six-shilling pieces, three moidores, two half-guineas, his silver watch, and about six shillings in silver; the two last of which he politely returned, at the same time telling him that, though necessity compelled him to take that method to raise a little money, to supply a present exigency, he was yet above taking anything less than gold; and then, wishing him a good morning, rode off across the heath towards the other road."

"Several boxes, some of great value, having lately been taken out of carts that deliver goods about town brought by waggon, and many trunks and portmanteaus taken out of the boots of coaches, and cut from behind postchaises and other carriages by two gangs of thieves, who for some time

have attended to this practice, some attempts were made to detect them; and, a few nights ago, as a postchaise, with a portmanteau behind it—for this purpose—was passing through Newgate-street, one of these offenders cut it off, and was apprehended with it upon his back. This man has since discovered his accomplices, by which means both the gangs have been either apprehended or drove out of London. Amongst the variety of offences which they have committed, the accomplice gives an account of the following one, of which no information at the time was made at Sir John Fielding's office—viz., that two of these offenders, the last day but one of Barnet races—the latter end of August last—stole out of a postchaise near Moorgate a portmanteau, containing three holland ruffled shirts, quite new, though one was lined at the hips, with some other trifles, and also a great coat which was with the portmanteau; that the gentleman got out of the chaise and walked towards Bethlehem, leaving a boy in care of the things, whom one of the thieves kept in discourse to take off his attention whilst the other stole them. The owner of this portmanteau, for the sake of public justice, is requested immediately to apply to the above magistrate."

"A discovery having been made of seventeen of the Light Horse—viz., Samuel Oates, John Broughton, George White, Joseph Weaver, Isaac Worthington, Richard Parks, William Barlow, William Walker, Joseph Evans, William Cooper, Edward Bromley, Richard Evans, William Swift, John Farley, William Young, John Godard, and John Evans—being concerned in divers robberies about town, by a person who had frequently bought some broken pieces of silver, &c., of one of them, who had impeached the rest of the gang, and informed Major Spinnage that two of them were to go out on Friday evening to rob on Turnham and Smallbury Greens; upon which information the major took Justice Fielding's clerk in a postchaise to Hounslow, in order to give proper directions for apprehending them; but on the road near Brentford they were stopped by John Evans and William Swift. Evans immediately put a horse-pistol into the chaise, which the major laid hold of, and it went off without doing any hurt; on which a pistol was fired from the chaise, which wounded Evans's cheek, and the persons in the chaise immediately jumped out, pursued and took both of them, and carried

them to Hounslow, where, by the neglect of a constable, Evans escaped, but was retaken. On their return to town they stopped at the guard-house at Kensington, where, by the information of an accomplice, they seized fifteen more; but, in the confusion, three of them made their escape by jumping out of a window. The commanding officer at the guard-room made some remonstrances on delivering up so many men, as his Majesty might want them the next day. The justice replied that they were then in the civil power, and it would be much better for his Majesty to travel without guards than be protected by highwaymen and footpads."

"A foreigner, supposed from Tripoli, by his dress, came to Hackney on Thursday morning on a visit to a person who was lately connected with the — ambassador. Between twelve and one in the night, a hackney coach, taken from the stand in White-chapel, carried four men to the above place, who, knocking at the door, demanded of the servant to show them the room in which the foreigner was to be found. The door being pointed out to them, they rushed in upon him, gagged and bound him hand and foot, threw a cord round his neck, by which they inhumanly dragged him downstairs upon his back, packed him into the coach, and then drove off. A person was immediately heard to say that he imagined the foreigner was by that time dead; his groans were heard by a person or two in the house, who were thrown into the utmost consternation. The whole transaction took up about ten minutes, and was conducted with so much secrecy and good management as to create various suspicions. It is hoped this matter will be thought to deserve some attention, as well as those of the Marquis de Fratteaux and M. D'Eon."

"An old piece of wanton wickedness is lately revived in this city. A number of fellows go about with bottles of aquafortis, which they empty on people's clothes, as a piece of high humour. On Monday last two ladies, one in a linen and the other in a satin sack, were served this pretty trick on Ludgate-hill; but the villains who practised it were unhappily not detected. As some of our readers may possibly meet an injury of this nature, we think it necessary to inform them that, by soaking the clothes thus daubed immediately in cold water, they will prevent the pernicious effects of the aquafortis; and it may be a satisfaction to inform

them that the person convicted of this offence is liable to be transported for seven years."

"On Thursday last Captain Fleming, aide-de-camp to the Earl of Hertford, was robbed by a single highwayman, between Towcester and Stony Stratford, of seventeen guineas. Captain Fleming, after he was robbed, went to Stony Stratford, where he procured two post-horses and a postboy, went in pursuit of the highwayman, and came up with him near the Earl of Pomfret's, near Towcester, when a clergyman, who was assisting to take him, desired him to surrender; which he refusing, he was by him shot dead on the spot. The robber had on a suit of blue clothes, a light-coloured great coat, and his hat and wig were almost new. He was of a middle stature, and a little marked with the small-pox; and was mounted on a bay gelding with a switch tail, and tan brown in some parts."

"Yesterday se'ennight was executed at Lynn, John Ruderham, for the murder of Leonard Wilson; and, after hanging the usual time, his body was delivered to the surgeons for dissection. He behaved with great penitence and devotion at the gallows, and confessed the fact for which he suffered. During his confinement he acknowledged being concerned in several robberies, particularly one in Kent and another in Norfolk. The night before he suffered, he confessed a plan had been formed by himself and two or three others, to have robbed this winter, every Tuesday night, in Streggit-place and places adjoining, as the people returned from Lynn Market; and for that purpose they were to have stolen their horses in Essex; and he himself went once to Fincham and Runcton Holme to see for a public-house that might suit them for a rendezvous. The people who were to have been concerned with him are well known. He said his ruin commenced from his entering into the Essex militia."

"The following is the real fact of the highwayman being shot on Thursday evening last: Two gentlemen, returning in a postchaise from London to the neighbourhood of Kew Green, near eight o'clock in the evening, about one hundred yards short of Gunnersbury-lane end, in the road to Brentford, were attacked by a single highwayman, mounted upon a small, nimble bay horse or mare, with a bushy, hanging black tail, dressed in a rough great coat, his hat a

little flapped before. After riding to the postilion and stopping him, he came to the right side of the chaise, and said something; which one of the gentlemen not clearly understanding, but suspecting his intentions, from the knowledge of a highwayman having long infested that part, put himself as far out of the window facing him as he could, with a pistol in his hand, and demanded in a very peremptory manner what he wanted. He then answered distinctly, with seeming resolution, 'Your money.' On which the gentleman instantly fired, which brought him upon his horse's neck; but before either of them could possibly get out of the chaise, they lost sight of him. It is imagined he escaped up the aforesaid lane, as his wound was dressed and the ball extracted from his shoulder the same evening by a surgeon at Acton, and went from thence, it is supposed, for London. Next morning a large pistol was found in the road close to where he was shot, supposed to have dropped from him on receiving his wound."

"Tuesday morning last, between the hours of seven and eight, Mr. Maskall Brooksby, of Wandsworth, an officer in the linen and calico printing duty, going over Barnes Common to attend his collector at Brentford, was robbed, about two hundred yards from the windmill on the said common, of £503 11s. 9d. by two young highwaymen, genteelly dressed and well mounted, one on a bay gelding, and the other on a black mare; afterwards they rode off in the direction of the white gate leading to Barnes Church. One of the villains insisted to have his watch, which was a gold one; but the other said, 'Curse the watch, what have we to do with watches?'"

"On Sunday night two hackney coaches were attacked under Hyde Park wall by two footpads armed with pistols. The first was returning from Hammersmith, and had no passengers; in the second were a gentleman and lady, from whom they took between three and four pounds.

"The same evening, between seven and eight o'clock, a young gentleman, about fourteen years of age, returning from Islington, was stopped near Bagnigge Wells by two fellows, who said they must have his money instantly, and fell to rifling him. Just as they had taken his watch from him a gentleman and two ladies appeared, whom the villains seeing, let drop the watch, and immediately made off towards Islington."

THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE CHINESE.

IN this matter-of-fact country, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the superstitions of the Celestial Empire, as depicted in Mr. Moule's chapters on China and the Chinese, sound very odd, and carry our thoughts back to times long gone by, when witches, ghosts, and the like flourished in "merrie England."

These superstitions, says Mr. Moule, if they show nothing else, prove undoubtedly that the Chinese are very *human*; and their very superstitious beliefs tell us that they are made of the same blood with their brethren in the West. Their belief in luck is deeply rooted, and is often a serious obstacle to the success of commercial enterprises, as will be seen by the following anecdote, for the general accuracy of which we can ourselves vouch:

A few years ago, an attempt was made by an English engineer to establish a line of telegraph between the port of Shanghai and the anchorage of Woosung, a distance of about twelve miles. The posts were erected, but some of them were immediately pulled down by villagers. They were put up again, and a second time were found prostrate. An appeal was made through the consuls to the Chinese authorities, who, after instituting an inquiry into the motives for this insult, reported that a man had died near one of the posts; that the neighbours asserted that he died in consequence of the dissipation or destruction of the luck of the village by the erection of these posts; that the fact of the man's death could not be denied, and the assertion of the villagers was not an improbable story; that vengeance on account of the death of the poor man could not be enforced, because of the unintentional nature of the injuries caused by the engineer; but that they (the authorities) altogether declined to interfere and compel the people to leave the line of telegraph unmolested.

It is most probable that the same superstition as to lucky influences weighs strongly with the Chinese statesmen, who are opposed to the introduction of railways and the undertaking of mining operations by foreigners.

One very extraordinary way in which Chinese superstition shows itself is in connection with the system of ancestral worship,

to which they attach extreme importance. They seem to believe that the unseen world is, in a certain way, a counterpart of things visible, and that the spirits of the departed stand in need of the same support as they did when living—food, clothes, and houses—reduced, however, to a state suitable for the use of the invisible, which they seem to imagine is to be attained by the process of burning! They have a curious way of carrying their superstition into effect. Having to provide, not on the day of the funeral alone, but in perpetuity, for the comforts of the departed, they take care that clothing, furniture, and money shall cost them as little as possible. They therefore manufacture imitations of these necessities in paper, the paper money being covered with tin or gilt foil; and on some occasions a paper house, ready furnished, is burned and passed entire into the unseen world.

The food of the spirits is managed more simply still. The feast is spread, hot and steaming; and the steam and fumes arising from the repast appear to form the nutriment of the spirits, for the substantial food is afterwards consumed by the relatives. From this feeling with regard to ancestral worship results the strong desire of every Chinaman to have a son instead of a daughter; for should the male line of his family fail, the ancestral feasts cannot be properly performed, and then not only his own spirit will be starved, but all his ancestors will be reduced to a state of beggary.

Witches, too, abound in China, and they are very generally consulted by the friends of the departed as to the condition and circumstances of the spirits in the other world. The people, moreover, are much afraid of the evil eye and the mysterious influence of these witches. Witchcraft is, however, treated as worse than a mere superstition in Chinese law, and is punishable with death.

Probably the most curious of Chinese superstitions is the *fung shuy*, or geomancy. The two words mean simply "wind and water;" but the true sense and import of this name for the superstition cannot be gathered from these words. The real object of the study and profession of the art of *fung shuy* is to woo the good and ward off the evil spirits, in whose existence and power to bless or curse the Chinese apparently entertain a profound belief. As northerly

winds blow in China from October to the end of March, it is not very surprising that the natives associate with them the death of Nature, as it were, and look upon that quarter of the compass as the one from which evil influences all emanate; and as southerly winds prevail during the rest and more cheerful part of the year, they conclude that all good and beneficial influences come from the south; consequently, all the temples and houses which can be so constructed, are built to face the south. But, observes Mr. Moule, it is in the selection of sites for graves that the talent of the professor of *fung shuy* is chiefly displayed. A thoroughly good situation must be one open to the south, with nothing abruptly to check the flow of the southerly blessing; and to the north there must be some hill or rising ground, some tree or other object, to check, puzzle, and defeat the tide of evil from that withering region. If the position be bad, the dead, irritated and annoyed by the unpleasant influence from the north, make known their resentment by causing sickness and other calamities to assail the family; and, finally, if the mischief is not repaired they make it wither away.

Each village has its *fung shuy*, its luck; and the hand of the man who would cut down a lucky tree, thus letting in a stream of curses from the north, is said to be paralyzed and withered on the spot.

Chinese villages are often built in squares, with houses on three sides, and the entrance open towards the south. The two sides, as you enter, have different degrees of honour and importance: the right hand is the green dragon, the left the white tiger; and if, by design or accident, the white tiger's head be lifted higher than the dragon's, or if any special advantage be gained by the left, then the luck of the place is gone. It is interesting to notice that this superstition of *fung shuy*, though it prevails so widely, and has taken such a deep root in the minds of the people, is yet denounced in the Sacred Edict as a capital crime.

The principle of table-turning was known to the Chinese for centuries before it became popular among western nations. The plan they adopt, we are told, is to strew a table with flour or sand, and either to suspend a writing pencil so that the point may just touch the table, or to fix it in the rim of an inverted wicker rice basket, which must be balanced on the fingers of two persons,

sitting opposite to each other. In either case, after quiet waiting, the pencil will begin to move, and will answer any questions which may be put, by writing on the sanded table. A Chinaman has been known to consult an oracle of this nature for the purpose of filling up some names which were wanting in his ancestral register. The difficulty of exposing this trick is very great, owing to the apparent impossibility of writing intricate Chinese characters with a pen suspended by a string, simply through the muscular energy caused by the united will of the two mediums.

The Chinese believe in ghosts, as will be seen by the following account, given by a Chinaman, of one which he alleged he had himself seen. He was returning from Hangchow to Ningpo in one of the large passenger boats, carrying from twenty to thirty persons, and propelled by two sculls at the stern, with four men tracking on the bank. One evening, with a low moon dimly shining through the mist, the trackers on the bank shouted loudly to the passengers. They stood up in the boat, and saw, about thirty yards beyond the foremost tracker, a figure as of a man. They called out, but there was no answer; they ran, and the ghost ran; they stood, and it stood. Whilst they were intently watching, it turned and plunged into the stream, but no ripple marked the face of the water, and there was no noise nor splash as it entered. It swam over the canal, scrambled out on the other side, and was seen to disappear in the mist beyond the bank!

To conclude. Mr. Moule tells us of a curious superstition which prevails in Java and in China, answering, in some measure, to the practice at home of nailing horse shoes over stables and barn doors. The Chinese, in some parts of the country, often keep one or more monkeys in their stables, evidently as a charm and a preservative against disease and accident to the animals. The origin of this custom is narrated in "Notes and Queries on China and Japan" (April, 1868). It appears that about 1,500 years ago the horse of a celebrated general suddenly dropped down dead. A man, named Kwoh-poh, happened to be calling on the general, and he said, "Send twenty or thirty vigorous fellows, armed with bamboos, into the woods, thirty miles off, which surround the temples of the gods of the land and grain. Let them beat the cover, and they will catch a thing which they must

bring back, and your horse will live again." The men were sent, and caught the thing, which resembled a monkey. When it came near the horse, it blew its breath into the horse's nostrils, and he got up suddenly, and ran as fleetly as before. The monkey, however, disappeared.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"HADN'T you better stop outside, Josiah?" I said, addressing the lad.

"I aint afraid, doctor," he replied. "I helped to bring it up from the shore, for the men wouldn't put a hand nigh it at first. I aint afraid, for I'm going to be a doctor myself when I'm old enough; and father says he'll let me walk the hospital at Pennyletter next year. He's spoken to Watson about it already."

"Indeed," I remarked. "Well, then"—here I removed the covering from the body, which, though in a shocking state of decomposition, was evidently that of a female past middle age, judging from her grey hair. She had been of medium height, and well nourished. Most of her teeth were deficient; but whether they had fallen out since death, I could not determine. The general appearance of the body satisfied me that it was that of the missing lady. It was totally destitute of clothing, with the exception of one stocking still clinging to the left leg.

On examination, this article of wearing apparel was found to be marked with the letters M. W., and the number 12. There was no longer any possible doubt: we had found the object of the last six weeks' search.

"Poor thing!" I exclaimed, reverently replacing the coarse covering that hid the bloated and disfigured relic of humanity from the public eye. "Poor thing—poor thing! Come, Josiah—there will have to be an inquest. I must communicate with the coroner at once."

On entering the farmer's house, my wife looked up at me with a beseeching eye—

"Tom, I want to see her. Mr. Dunlop says there is no doubt. What do you think?"

"I am of the same opinion, my dear. But come along, if you wish."

The farmer accompanied us, in order to guide my wife through the intricacies of the farmyard, where some score or so of monstrous pigs revelled on a prodigious mudheap, which they had reduced to the consistence of pulp, and from whence, in the warm sunshine, exhaled odours more pungent than agreeable.

"They trample it well down," exclaimed Mr. Dunlop, referring to the unclean animals; "and it all runs off into a tank at yon corner. It's a fine thing for the land, I can tell you."

My wife shuddered slightly at the first sight of the ghastly spectacle that awaited her in the shed, but otherwise exhibited no sign of faltering or emotion, even when the farmer drew back the canvas from the poor disfigured, I might say obliterated, face.

After having gazed for a few seconds upon the body, Emma turned calmly away, and, in a firm tone of voice, remarked—

"I was sure of it, Tom: that is not Mrs. Woodward."

"Not now, dearest," I replied; "but it was, a few weeks since."

"Never, Tom. It is much more like Margery; but it is not she, either."

"Margery!" exclaimed the farmer. "You don't mean Margery M'Anvil, do you, Mrs. Cochrane?"

"No," replied my wife, "I do not say it is Margery; but it is far more like her than Mrs. Woodward."

"You'll excuse me, ma'am, but I think there is no reasonable doubt about it's being the rector's lady, poor thing."

"I feel sure of it too," I said.

"Time will tell," replied my wife.

"True, ma'am," agreed the farmer, "so it will." Then turning to me, "You'll write to the coroner, doctor, I suppose, or shall I?"

"I will, Mr. Dunlop; but I don't suppose he'll come himself—most likely, send an order for the burial of the body."

"Look here, doctor—if he does, mind you, I'll complain to the Poor Law Board, as sure as my name is William Orange Dunlop. What's a coroner for, I'd like to know?"

"The district is too large for one man, Mr. Dunlop."

"That's where it is, doctor. I said so at the last meeting of the guardians, and I proposed that Dumfermahalee and Moighrath

should be separated from Pennyletter, and given to you."

"Thanks. But I expect your proposal was not even seconded."

"Excuse me, doctor, lawyer Usher seconded it, and Mr. Mercer spoke up for you too. But I don't mean to let it drop, I assure you. You get Sir John to put in a word for you, and the thing's as good as done."

"Really, Mr. Dunlop, I've about as much to do here as I can manage—and more, too, sometimes—without burdening myself with onerous and none too remunerative duties."

"Let me alone," returned the farmer; "I'll do what I can for you."

"Thanks."

"Not at all—see what I owe you for bringing my Billy through the fever. Why, he'd have died to a surety if Connell had gone on with him, and I hadn't called you in. But look here, if I were you I'd ask the coroner, if he hasn't time to come down himself, to order a magisterial inquiry—Mr. Dobbie, or some of the gentlemen that are on the bench. There'd be no chance of Sir John, I suppose?"

"Yes, that is not a bad idea, Mr. Dunlop. Some inquiry is essential. I shall not forget your suggestion."

Then, turning to my wife, I said—

"We had better get homewards, dear, especially if I am to have an answer from the coroner to-day."

"You are too late for the post now," replied my wife.

"What's to be done?"

"Send Isaac in to Pennyletter, and desire him to wait for an answer."

"Yes," I assented, "that is certainly the best thing we can do; and I am much obliged to you, my dear, for thinking of it."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AFTER partaking of some refreshment, which it would have been considered the height of rudeness for us to refuse, we began our homeward journey in silence, too much occupied with our several reflections to speak, or notice the sky smiling above us, the light fleecy clouds sailing steadily in the breeze, the warbling of the birds in the hedges, and the booming of the billows on the beach.

When we arrived at my house, we found

the rector awaiting our return, in a state of extreme agitation.

"Well?" he exclaimed as he caught sight of us. "Well?"

"One moment, Charles," I said, as quietly as possible, and drew him into my study, while Emma ran upstairs to see after the children.

"Well?" again exclaimed the rector, when I had closed the door upon us. "Is it true?"

"It is true," I replied.

"Thank Heaven!" he exclaimed; and then, as if conscious that his exclamation was susceptible of a double interpretation, added—"that she has been found—not that the poor soul is gone, Tom."

"It is certainly a melancholy satisfaction," I replied, "to have our doubts cleared up, and our suspense—"

"Yes," he exclaimed, eagerly, "that is just what I meant. I suppose there is no doubt—it is Ma—it is she?"

"I have no doubt, Charles; but Emma has. She seems to be positive that the body is that of some stranger, and not of your wife."

He started.

"You don't say so! But who else could it be, Tom? Your wife must be mistaken."

"I think she is," I replied; "but you will have to see it yourself."

"I couldn't, Tom, indeed. I'll take your word for it, old fellow."

"My word won't do, Charles. You will have to see it yourself, for the purpose of identification. I am going to write to the coroner, and if you do not voluntarily attend at the inquest, you will be subpoenaed; so you may as well make a virtue of necessity, and go first as last."

"Well, if I must go, I must, I suppose," he said. "And, after all, what matter? It was not my fault. It was not I drove her to it."

I held my peace, for had I spoken it would have been to say—

"Had you been kinder to her, Charles, in her great affliction, her reason would not have given way, and this sad tragedy would never have been enacted."

I communicated in due course with the coroner, who, being unable to attend, directed the police sergeant to ask Dr. Dobbie to hold the necessary investigation; for that gentleman was on the commission of the peace, and, in the absence of Sir John Mid-

dleton, was chairman of the petty sessions at Dumfarnaghalee.

The attendance of two magistrates was essential; and Sir John having pleaded indisposition, and Mr. Langton business, the sergeant had to fall back upon Mr. Twaddell, who had recently been appointed a magistrate. The inquest was held in Mr. Dunlop's drawing-room; when the necessary preliminaries having been duly arranged, the body viewed by the jury, and the witnesses examined in proper form, including Charles Woodward and myself, the jury retired, and, after the lapse of half an hour, returned to say "That the deceased came by her death in the water, but how there was no evidence to show; and that she is the wife of the rector of Dumfarnaghalee, who was lost six weeks ago, the same day Margery M'Anvil went to America."

The finding of the jury was expressed in rather ambiguous language, as Irish verdicts very often are; but all concerned were perfectly satisfied with it; and the death having been duly registered, the interment took place next day in Dumfarnaghalee churchyard, where a plain monument was subsequently erected by the rector to the memory of his departed wife, who was thus, even in death, separated from the child whose early and sudden loss had unseated her reason, and brought her, poor lady, to an untimely grave.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BUT I have been somewhat anticipating, and must now fall back and relate, in due course, a series of incidents which, following rapidly upon one another, during the interval that elapsed between Mrs. Woodward's disappearance and the discovery of her remains, materially influenced the after-career of more than one of the persons mentioned in the preceding pages.

Passing over, for the present, the history of Robert's courtship, and the opening of the two antagonistic places of worship in the village, I will first record a conversation that took place between Sir John Middleton and myself in the dispensary, one morning immediately following the date of Robert's first visit at Ardmore.

Sir John, as I have already mentioned, was long past middle age—in point of fact, he was sixty-three, but hale and hearty enough, and likely, in all probability, to live a good many years longer; always suppos-

ing, of course, that the rigorous climate of the country where he had taken up his abode exercised no deleterious influence upon a constitution long accustomed to a more genial atmosphere.

As yet, however, the change had seemed to be rather beneficial than otherwise; but then it is the second winter that generally tries the returned colonist the most.

Still the baronet was the very last person I would have suspected of harbouring any such idea as he confided to me on that occasion—truly, the very last.

"Do you know, doctor," he said, smiling and drawing himself up to his full height, "I think I have taken a new lease of my life. I never felt better than I have done since I came home."

"I am glad to hear it, Sir John," I replied; "and hope you may long be able to give as satisfactory an account of yourself."

"Thank you. I have come over expressly to confide in you."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, as a man of the world. You know how I am situated. You see, I realised a very handsome independence in Australia, and have, moreover, quite unexpectedly inherited a title and a large estate in this country."

"Yes, Sir John."

"Well, had my poor brother Robert lived, I should not have thought of taking such a step as I now contemplate; but I have no heir"—the old gentleman paused, as if expecting me to say something; and I ventured to suggest—

"Miss Middleton—is she not your heiress, Sir John?"

"True," he replied. "Mary is an excellent, if inexplicable, girl. You have no idea how many good offers she has refused."

"Indeed."

"Yes. When Sir Hercules Smith, the governor, lost his wife, he proposed for my daughter; and though he was a capital fellow, and quite a young man, she refused him, and positively declined to render any reason for so doing."

"Strange!" I answered, as the old gentleman appeared to expect me to say something; "but who can account for a young lady's fancies?"

"That's where it is, doctor. Then she refused young Mooney. You knew him, I suppose?"

"Not personally, Sir John; but I know who he is."

"Yes, she actually refused him, and without giving any reason for so doing; though his father is a millionaire, as you know, and he himself as well-educated and as handsome a young fellow as could be."

"I have always understood, Sir John, that old Mooney was transported. Is it true?"

"Well, yes—I believe so," reluctantly admitted the baronet; "but we must not visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, doctor, eh? Philip will be the leading man of the colony by and by, I feel sure. He was educated at Cambridge, and is a gentleman in every sense of the word."

"I have heard he was clever and popular."

"So he is. Well, she positively refused to marry him, and several others very nearly as eligible; and I cannot make out the reason why."

"Ladies are difficult to please, Sir John, particularly when they are the possessors of such charms as belong to Miss Middleton."

"Hum! she is a pretty girl enough; but she is letting her best years go by, doctor—she is letting her best years go by. But there must be some other reason. Long ago I fancied she was in love with our rector here. He was not a clergyman then; and I would have been glad if she had taken him, for I liked the young man, and had a great regard for his father, who was my chum in college, and a most excellent fellow; but that fancy, if it ever existed, must have died out long ago."

So I did not think; but as the baronet did not require me to give any opinion upon the subject, I kept my thoughts to myself.

"I had an overseer, too," continued Sir John—"a mulatto, who had the presumption and the impertinence to ask my permission to pay his addresses to her; and the thought has occurred to me that she may really have been fond of him."

"Oh, Sir John!" I exclaimed.

"I have thought so," continued the baronet, without taking any heed of my exclamation; "but I have discovered that my impression was erroneous. Still it is strange, very strange; and now she insists upon remaining here, and won't hear of our going to London, or even to Dublin, so that I shall be absolutely compelled to get into Parliament in order to force her out of this."

"You will stand for the county, then, Sir John?"

"Yes—at least, I have nearly made up my mind to do so. Every one says I must, and I suppose I shall have no peace unless I do. But about my future: I wanted to tell you I think of marrying again."

The baronet saw my look of surprise, and evidently was annoyed, for he exclaimed—

"You think I am an old fool, I see. Be candid—don't deny it."

"Really, Sir John, I—"

"There, there—out with it. Say I am an idiot, and have done with it."

"Excuse me, I cannot say that."

"Of course not—you are too polite; but you think it."

"No, Sir John, I do not. I presume most people know their own business best, and your own feelings ought to be your best guide in the matter. But I see no objection to your marrying again, Sir John, providing the lady be of a suitable age."

"That's where it is," exclaimed Sir John, nervously twitching his watch chain. "You will say she is too young, and that I am a fool for thinking of her."

"May I ask, Sir John, if you have spoken to the lady?"

"No, doctor, I have not. I have waited to hear your opinion before venturing to do so."

"I congratulate you, Sir John."

"What, before you know whether I will be accepted?"

"My dear sir," I replied, smiling in spite of myself, "there is not a girl in the county who would not give one of her eyes to be Lady Middleton."

"Hem!" coughed the baronet, and sighed.

"At my age, to be sure, love is out of the question, and a marriage de convenance all I can hope for or expect."

"Many such unions, Sir John, turn out happier than the most infatuated of love matches."

"Thank you for saying so, doctor. Of course, it is in my power to make handsome settlements. But, seriously, do you think I am likely to be accepted, when I make up my mind to propose?"

"I think you may make yourself quite easy upon that score, Sir John; unless—"

"Unless what, doctor?"

"Unless you should, unfortunately, have made choice of a lady with a previous engagement; but even then I would not be

too sure of your eventually failing, if you made up your mind to persevere."

"You think my fortune and position sufficient to outweigh the pretensions of the most favoured swain?"

"Candidly, I do."

"You have a bad opinion of the sex, doctor."

"Of human nature, and its natural weakness, Sir John."

"Hum! I am not ambitious of the honour of figuring in the courts of law."

"There will be no danger of that, Sir John."

"I trust not. I shall take every reasonable precaution; but Miss—I am speaking in confidence, you know, and feel that I may depend upon your discretion—but do you think that Miss St. Clair has any attachment?"

"Really, Sir John," I replied, after mentally revolving the subject in all its bearings for a moment, "it is impossible for me to say. I have not the pleasure of any great acquaintance with the young lady, and cannot speak of my own knowledge in the matter."

"But rumour, doctor, rumour, as implied in your answer, says she has an engagement, eh?"

"I never pay any attention to rumours, Sir John; and, in this case, I can safely say I never even heard it hinted that Miss St. Clair was likely to be married."

"Hum! I need not, of course, repeat my caution as to secrecy, for the present at least."

"Quite unnecessary for you to do so, Sir John," I replied, rather nettled by his manner.

"Mary has such an uncertain temper," continued Sir John. "I was half afraid to think of marrying again; but this morning at breakfast she asked me what I thought of Miss St. Clair, in such a pointed manner that I knew at once she had read my secret."

I perceived a clue to the solution of a problem that had puzzled me not a little. It was evident that Miss Middleton's desire to see Miss St. Clair settled arose from less disinterested motives than at first sight appeared.

"I was rather taken aback, I must confess," continued the baronet; "but I put as good a face upon the matter as I could, and said to my daughter—

"That depends, my dear. What do you think?"

"I think nothing at all," she answered. "I am not sufficiently acquainted with her, papa, to form any opinion as to her merits or shortcomings. I only ask for information."

"What did you say to that, Sir John?"

"Not anything," replied the baronet. "I could see she was fencing, and put myself upon my guard. What, think you, she asked me next?"

"I cannot say. Whether you thought of marrying again, perhaps?"

"No, doctor—no; she positively wanted to know if I had made my will!"

"Indeed!"

"Indeed she did. I was never more shocked in my life. A girl I have idolized, to whom I never denied the slightest wish expressed, that was in my power to grant—to think of her asking me such a question! I was shocked, and she saw it, as I intended she should, and begged my pardon; so we made peace—or, perhaps, I ought to say, patched up a hollow truce. She was always a wilful girl, and does not improve. I fear I am much to blame for my foolish indulgence. She is no more like her mother than if she were not her child at all."

TABLE TALK.

THE War Office people are coming to their senses respecting the clothing of soldiers. In the name of all common sense, is a Grenadier, stiffened, buckled, knapsacked, and crowned with a huge bearskin, accoutred so that he can run, dash at an enemy, or move with anything like vigour and activity? And yet his absurd costume is preserved. Men have been sent to India in heavy scarlet, and to cold climates in shoddy. An improvement is, however, setting in; for we read with respect to the Ashantee War:—"The non-commissioned officers who have gone in advance of the expedition had sent after them to Liverpool, and taken in the same ship, their African outfit, consisting of a light grey tweed tunic, resembling a shooting jacket, with belt, trousers of the same material, and tough canvas leggings, the head being covered with a light helmet of the Indian pattern. This costume has been selected, after careful inquiry, as the most suitable for the service; and it is probable that it will be the uniform

of all the British troops employed in the expedition." The time may come when those in authority will think the suggestions of poor Captain Nolan, who fell at Balaklava, more worthy of notice, and adopt them for our cavalry.

THE SAD ACCIDENT in Chancery-lane the other day, when a poor woman was run over and killed by a Favorite omnibus, brings strongly forward the question of personal safety in the streets. As for the Favorite omnibuses, they are carefully driven, and drivers and conductors are a very civil, respectable body of men. With a heavily-laden omnibus a sharp pull-up is almost an impossibility, and this tragic affair was an accident pure and simple. But how is it with the cart and cab drivers of our streets? The writer of this note has no hesitation in saying that twenty times within the last month, while crossing roads, as many drivers would have driven deliberately over him. The idea seems to be that the road belongs exclusively to the driver, and that it is no business of his to look after the life of a wayfarer. He does not see that the crossing is a continuation of the pathway, and that it behoves him to be careful while going over one. The rule is to be within an ace of killing a foot passenger, and then to insult him with a torrent of abuse for not getting out of the way. Holding back to let you pass is not to be thought of. There may well be a terrible average of deaths in the London streets; for if the active and able-bodied run risks, what is the position of the aged and infirm?

FINES CONTINUE to be inflicted upon dairymen for adulterating milk with water, and very properly, in the face of these terrible typhoid revelations. No doubt the water is added in the country farmyard from the nearest pump, perhaps from a pond; and what the water is may easily be imagined. But setting aside the question of disease and its dangers, it was time a stop was put upon the trickery of the milk vendors. The last convicted has had to pay a fine of twenty pounds. Water rates are heavy enough, without our having to pay for the necessary fluid at the rate of fourpence per quart, and disguised as milk.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, from by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 302.

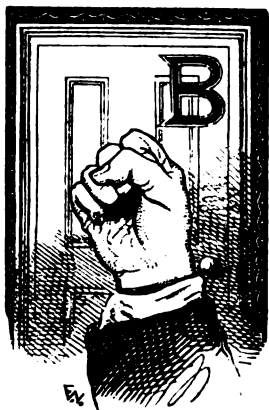
October 11, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XXXV.

SAVED FOR THIS ONCE.



UT Rivière had not seen the dark shawled figure that was leaning out of the window of his lodging, and did not know that that figure, after listening eagerly for such words as she could catch of the conversation that took place at the door,

came down hastily and followed slowly upon the track of those who had gone before.

For Marie Rivière was ill at ease. She doubted her husband. She felt convinced that he went to the Lawlers', and that he had deceived her upon that point; but was he not her husband still, and should she not, as far as in her lay, watch over him and guard him from all evil? There was danger abroad, she was sure of that. Lemaire would certainly, if the chance offered, do Rivière any ill, even to mortal injury; and now, as she walked cautiously along the street, she bitterly regretted the estrangement, and would have given years of her life to have been open with her husband, and consulted with him how to set danger at defiance.

But had he not shut her out fast from his confidence—cheated her, tricked her? Yes, and she had been angry and bitter, and had determined that she would give him secrecy for secrecy. But that was all past now. There was danger abroad, she was sure, and,

let him deceive her as he would, her place was at his side.

Perhaps there was no reason for her great anxiety this night; but it was foolish of him, so late, to go with that stranger. Why could he not have found his own way?

She had been looking for him so impatiently, regretting all the long evening that she had not persuaded him to stay at home, and had been up and down hour after hour, wildly anxious. All the same, though, she had made little excursions into the neighbouring streets, to see if she could find out where he was staying; always returning at the end of a few minutes, lest he should have arrived in her absence. At last, as it grew late and she was watching, she had seen him come, had seen him stopped by the stranger, had hurried down, and was now following him at a distance, with the determination of joining him as soon as he was alone, and of then telling him all her doubts and fears. There should be no more separation, no reticence on her side; she would tell him how Lemaire dogged her steps, and trust to him to save her from further molestation.

Yes, she would forgive him, and try to win him back by gentle love. She would not upbraid him with a word, or hint at her suspicion of his visits to Grosvenor-square, and all would yet be well.

That was strange!

A shiver passed through Marie Rivière's frame, as, after passing through street after street, always keeping her husband in sight, she first doubted, then made sure that three men were watching him—two being close upon his track.

She tried to throw off the suspicion. If she waited till they had gone a little farther, she felt sure that she would see them turn some other way.

She waited; and then grew hot and cold by turns, for they followed still. There was one, too, in front; and at the end of the next

street her doubts resolved themselves into realities—Rivière was being watched.

Yes, there was no doubt of it now; and she shortened the distance between them, the men being so intent upon their object that they did not notice her, or if they did paid no heed, taking her for some outcast of the night.

There would be something happen, then, as soon as Rivière had parted from this stranger, unless she was there ready to join him, when probably her presence would keep them at bay. He should go no more alone by night.

At one time she determined to speak to the policeman she met; but gave the project up the next moment, telling herself that there would be no necessity; for however nefarious the design, her presence would be sufficient to ward off danger.

She followed pretty closely, then, till the last street was reached; and then like a flash came the idea—suppose this stranger were one of the party?

The blood flew to her eyes, and her heart beat tumultuously. She would wait no longer, but join her husband at once. She hurried forward, trying hard to accelerate her pace, as by the light of the lamps she saw Rivière entering the open doorway, and the men close up as if driving him in.

Good Heaven! would she be too late? They would murder him before she could get there. Her feet seemed weighted, and everything was like some horrid nightmare, wherein she seemed to be held back; but in truth she had almost flown, and reached the open door to see a struggle going on, and in time to utter a piercing cry for help.

Four men were overpowering one whom they had taken by surprise, and a weak woman was sufficient in her devotion to put them to flight.

That one piercing cry was sufficient; they had not reckoned upon such an interruption, and with a wholesome dread of the legal executive of the country of their adoption, one and all fled, leaving Rivière half stunned as he staggered to his feet.

"Quick!" exclaimed Marie, leading him; and the next minute they were hurrying along the street, uninterrupted; for not a soul was to be seen.

One or two windows had been thrown up, and heads had been thrust curiously out, for their owners to gaze after the men, who ran down the street—two, the others having dis-

appeared in the house; but as no further sound disturbed the night, and the cry had not reached the ears of the police, the windows were soon closed, and the fugitives reached their home in safety.

"Louis, we must not stay here longer—in this city," exclaimed Marie, trembling violently as she clung to her husband, now he was safe.

"You saved my life," he whispered, in a half-scared fashion. "I was trapped; but you were in time. It was yours, and you saved it."

"Yes, it is mine," she said, clinging to him, and gazing lovingly into his eyes. "You know, though, who has done this?"

"Yes," he said, hoarsely, as the veins stood up on his temples; "it was Lemaire."

"Yes," she said, shuddering, "he is the evil genius of our lives."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SIR RICHARD'S ANSWER.

THE next morning Marie Rivière told all of her own experience. How Lemaire had watched her day after day, and dogged her steps till she had dreaded to leave the house; and Rivière ground his teeth as he listened to the recital. It was in vain, though, that Marie besought him to stay within doors. He was not hurt in his last night's encounter, and this last intelligence, though it was no more than he had expected, was as fuel to a furnace already heated.

He promised to be back before dark, and to expose himself to no risks—that was the only concession he would make; and then he hurried away, his blood boiling, and half furious now against Sir Richard Lawler.

Out in the busy streets, though, after walking for some time he grew a little calmer. He fell to thinking about Lady Lawler, and he regretted the collision for her sake. She had been so generous, so kind to Marie, in his distress.

"He does not comprehend our ways, this brutal Englishman," he muttered. "My faith, was he a pig-head, and had foolish thoughts? She is good and kind; but she is a great child, that wife of his. But," he continued, grimly, "she has a temper, and she will show it to him. Poor fool! Yes, I will send an apology, and I will forgive him. But the lessons? Ah, they are at an end."

This set him thinking of ways and means, and he strode on very fast through the

streets, thinking, thinking ever; but no good idea came.

"It is a cursed place, this London!" he said, shaking his clenched fist at the door of a handsome mansion. "How little, how very little, would suffice to keep us, and yet we shall soon be ready to starve; anyhow, it is better than prison."

At length, tired out, he returned just as it was dark, to find Marie, pale and anxious, at the open window, eagerly watching for his coming.

A day passed—two days—three days. What should they do? Return to France? That was imprisonment for life. Stay where they were? That seemed to betoken starvation. Rivière walked up and down the room like a caged tiger.

Knock—no, bang!—at the door.

Rivière, with his soul panting within him, rushed to open it. Was it news? Was it an apology from Sir Richard Lawler?

The grubby face of a very small girl appeared, with tears wet on her cheeks, which she was polishing with the corner of a black-leady apron.

"If you plee, sir—"

"Oui, yes—speak, my child."

"Which I didn't want to come and say it, sir, but missus—"

"Yes, you have brought a letter."

"No, sir; and she says if you don't—" the child stopped—"don't leave off stamping, out you go."

The girl half shrieked the last words, in her dread of Rivière, who seemed, to use her own expression, about to fly at her; and half the sentence was uttered as she was hurriedly descending the stairs, to where her mistress was waiting in ambush ready to administer a cuff as the girl hurried by, with the result that there was a smothered cry, a slip, the bumping of some very badly encased bones upon the stairs, followed by a snivelling noise and a series of sobs from the mat.

"You hussey!" exclaimed a vinegary voice, aloud, and it was meant for the girl, who had dared to fall; but it also ascended to Rivière, who closed his door softly, saying—

"Qu'est ce que c'est hussey?" And then he walked softly up and down the room, muttering to himself—"Madame is a little indisposed."

In fact he was thinking a good deal of the rent—a miserable minor matter that would intrude itself painfully, and clash with his

stern notions of honour and a meeting with Sir Richard Lawler.

"It was very strange," he said; and then he grew elate, for an impatient knock resounded through the house, and, yes—no—yes—ah, yes, that was his name—a cry upon the stairs—

"Mister Rivvyer."

It was his landlady, and she had indeed a letter, which he took with eager eyes and carried to the window.

Yes! It was Sir Richard Lawler's hand, and addressed to the café, whence it had been sent to him; but Marie would see it! How awkward! How foolish of him not to call to-day and see if it had come! But he must open it, and he did, trying to tear open the great envelope with nonchalance, so as to leave the broad seal of the Lawlers untouched.

"Is it good news, Louis?" whispered a voice at his side. "Let there be no more secrets, my husband."

The envelope dropped from Rivière's hand. He stood, pale and panting; then without heeding his trembling wife, he placed the unread letter between his teeth, and tore and tore at it, dragging it away as he spat the fragments furiously about the room, until the missive was a mere litter of scraps.

"But he shall meet me!" he hissed, grinding his teeth. "Marie, it is too much."

"What is it?" she whispered, soothingly. "You did not read the letter."

"Read it? No, not now. My faith, no! But I did write it, write it to him; and the coward sends it to me back, marked across with his pen."

Marie was silent; she waited for his confidence, which did not come.

"Only another insult," he said, laughing, with a strange calm coming over him. "Our life grows eventful, dear one. But wait—wait—our time will come."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

FOR HER SAKE.

DAYS passed, and still no confidence on the side of Rivière.

"She would be frightened," he reasoned with himself. "How can I tell her that I shall fight with him? It would drive her mad. Is it not enough that she knows of Lemaire, and the way he dogs us?"

But that danger seemed to be at an end. Rivière went in and out, at first cautiously,

then with more daring; and at last he grew careless, in spite of Marie's prayers that he would be prudent.

"Bah!" he said. "The police will take care of me, and I shall not be trapped again."

He went out to the cafés by night, and obtained a little teaching in the neighbourhood, just sufficient to enable them to keep body and soul together. He picked up friends, too—compatriots who frequented the various places of resort—and they were sociable to a degree; but they seemed as poor as himself.

By degrees, the bitter rage against Sir Richard Lawler seemed to fade away—not that he would not have gladly gone out to meet him; but privation and misery blunted his fine notions of honour, and he had to fight hard for a living.

Downward, always downward, seemed to be Louis Rivière's course, in spite of every effort; and now, after many months' sojourn in England, he found himself, with his wife in a state that needed his utmost care and attention, verging upon the borders of starvation. Lack of introduction had been his great difficulty, and those who could have introduced him were now his enemies.

"This must come to an end soon," Rivière said, bitterly, one morning, as he sat in their bare room. "I cannot suffer much more."

There was no reply from his pallid wife, beyond that which came from her eyes.

What thoughts passed through the exile's breast need not be recorded here; they were interrupted by the sound of the landlady's voice—harsh, stringent, and defiant.

"Munseer Rivyer—Munseer Rivyer."

Rivière started trembling from his rickety chair, for this woman was an enemy he dreaded: he owed her weeks of rent.

"Do not let her come in, Louis, I cannot bear it," moaned his wife.

"No, mon enfant, she shall not come," exclaimed Rivière; and he ran to the door and held it fast.

"Munseer Rivyer!" came the voice again, "here's a letter."

"A letter!" exclaimed the exile, excitedly. "Mon Dieu! who would write to me?"

He took the letter, closed the door hastily, and hastened to the window; but a mist seemed to swim before his eyes, and his hand trembled so that he could not open it.

"It is some fresh trouble, Marie," he ex-

claimed to his wife, who was eagerly watching his every movement. "I cannot read it."

"Give it to me," she exclaimed, hoarsely.

He passed the letter, and with eager fingers she opened it, and read in French—

"DEAR COMPATRIOT—There are lessons to be given at the house of Lord Lynedale. I come to learn it this instant, and I think of thee. You must be—forgive me that I say it—well-dressed, and ready with a good recommendation from some English family. You will rejoice to hear that I am gaining ground.—Yours, "ADOLPHE MERCIER."

"And who is Adolphe Mercier?" asked Marie. "Pray beware."

"Only a poor compatriot that I have met at the café hard by," said Rivière, with brightening eyes, till he glanced down at himself. "But I am in rags, and I have no recommendation. Why did he show us this bright picture, when we cannot possess it?"

"Why—why," said Marie, hesitating—"why not ask those people to be your friends?"

"What people?" said Rivière, wonderingly.

"Those people who received us when we came."

"The Lawlers? Impossible!"

"No, Louis, it is not impossible," said Marie, clutching his hand in hers. "Ask them, and they will help you. I know what you think, and I own it all: I was foolish and weak, and I misjudged you. I know now that it was blind folly; but then that woman frightened me. I feared that she would rob me of all that was dear to me—your love. I ought to have known better; but you will forgive me."

The next moment he held her weeping to his breast.

"You will go—no, write and ask them, then, to help you in this our time of trouble."

"No, no, Marie, I cannot."

"Cannot? Oh, Louis, think of me!"

"Do not drive me mad, Marie. I do think of you night and day, but I cannot do that."

"Why not? You must not be proud now, Louis. Think, we are little more than beggars."

"Do you suppose I do not see that? But do not ask me, Marie."

"But I must, Louis. For your own sake—for my sake, pray, pray do this."

He hesitated for a few minutes, and then threw up his hands in despair.

"I cannot do it," he said.

No more passed then; but during the afternoon, Marie urged him again and again, telling him once more of her folly, and how she blamed herself for her jealousy, which had stood in the way of their advancement.

"But I will never be jealous of you again, Louis. And now you will write?"

"I cannot, Marie," he exclaimed; "you don't know all."

"But, indeed I do," she exclaimed.

And she urged him still, hour after hour, begging him at last with tears; until, feeling that the urgency must force him to forget all his own scruples, and regretting now sorely that he had acted towards his wife clandestinely in his visits to Grosvenor-square, but telling himself that it was impossible that he could enlighten her now, he sat down and wrote a few lines to Sir Richard Lawler, telling him in a quiet, gentlemanly way, that he looked upon the blows he had received as the result of a misconception—telling the baronet that he had wronged him cruelly; and ending by begging for assistance to enable him to seek and obtain the engagement his friend had intimated to him to be at liberty. He carefully abstained from mentioning Lady Lawler's name; and trusting to the Englishman's generosity, now that he had humbled himself, Rivière posted the letter, and felt almost light-hearted with hope and the victory he had gained over himself.

"It is for thy sake, Marie," he said.

"Yes," she whispered, lovingly; "and it will prosper. There will be an end to these dark clouds now, so let us be hopeful."

Rivière went out soon after. During his absence from home, a few qualms of conscience again troubled him that he had not been open with his wife; but he waived them now, telling himself that the Lawlers would be friendly enough to help him, but there could be no more intimacy. It would be better that he should only avail himself of the introduction and a little monetary aid. He could pay that back soon. He saw himself, with all the Frenchman's sanguine temperament, already on the high road to fortune.

"Fate has done her worst for us now," he said. "We shall henceforth have sunshine."

He returned that night light-hearted and happy; for, let alone the hopefulness, he was

glad that he had gained such a victory over self; and now he could have taken Sir Richard Lawler by the hand, and treated the past as something that had never been.

Poor Rivière! how different would have been his feelings could he have looked into the future as easily as he had read the by-gone. He could not tell, though, that Sir Richard Lawler had received and replied to the letter. He could not tell that there had been bitterness for months between the baronet and his lady—the latter feeling that she was aggrieved by her husband's suspicions; and though before society the semblance of affectionate relations was kept up, and the servants only knew that there was a coolness between them, Lady Lawler declared that she would never forgive her husband until he had apologized to Rivière.

At first Sir Richard had treated this with contempt, laughingly telling himself that before long her ladyship would be glad to sue for pardon, he not having the slightest intention of carrying his anger and suspicion into the Divorce Court. He was disappointed, though; and surprised to find that his wife could be as obstinate as himself, quietly giving up society to a great extent, and settling down to the company of her child, of whom she was passionately fond; although Jane declared to her lover, Abram Higgs, that "she never see such fondness, never wanting to see the boy but twice a day, or three times at the most. If she ever had children—"

Here modesty taught Jane that she had gone farther than she meant, and she ended her discourse with a few sharp nods of the head.

Rivière woke light-hearted and happy; his sanguine imagination telling him that this was to be a bright and happy day for them both. Marie took her tone from him, and they ate their frugal breakfast with enjoyment, Rivière going out soon after to give a lesson—one of thirteen he was to impart for half a guinea.

"I shall be back by one," he said, "and then I shall stay at home and await the answer; though I do not expect it before evening. These aristocrats are very slow with the pen."

He nodded and departed—staying, however, a few moments to speak on the staircase to his waylaying landlady, whom he told hopefully that he should soon be able

to pay now, and then hurried away to give his lesson.

Here, however, there was a shock for him, and which upon another occasion would have troubled him sorely; this day he viewed the cross lightly, though he had but two pupils, and this was one.

It was but a repetition of that which he had learned again and again: a pupil who was the most eager to begin was the soonest tired of the tedious humdrum of the French regular and irregular verbs.

The lesson finished, Rivière walked cheerfully back towards Soho, troubling himself but little that he was to give no more at the same place. His future wore a rosier aspect, and upon reaching the square it troubled him still less that he saw a man he took to be Lemaire hurriedly crossing the road.

"I have seen things in a bilious aspect," muttered Rivière, smiling; "and no wonder, when all looked so gloomy. Now for the letter."

He leaped lightly up a couple of steps at a time, and paused for a few moments, breathless, upon the landing before entering his room. He could not have said why, had he been asked, but something seemed to restrain him; the bright look-out of the future looked more dim, and an undefined sense of something wrong seemed to attack him and warn him back.

Was anything wrong with Marie? Pish! he was unstrung; and seizing the handle, he entered hastily, to confront his wife, standing, pale and set of teeth, her eyes seeming to flash as she took a step forward to meet him, holding out at arm's length a letter.

"Here!" she exclaimed, "see how cruel they are, though we starve!"

Rivière snatched from her hand the open letter, to read as follows:—

"I have had your letter, which is only equalled in insolence by its cool villainy. You ask me to give you money, and a recommendation into a noble family. What for? To insinuate yourself into the favour of the lady of the house, to wreck the happiness of another home? Do you think I have forgotten the scene that day when I returned to chastise your insolence, after you had for weeks come to and fro, generally unknown to me? I need say no more; only that my servants have orders, in case you should

show yourself at my house, to hand you over instantly to the police.

"RICHARD LAWLER."

For a few minutes Rivière stood as if stunned, apparently unable to comprehend the gist of that which he read. He turned the letter in his hands, and gazed from it to his angry wife, who seemed to tower above him in her fierce passion; then he re-read the letter, with fury now beginning to flash from his own eyes, till a sound caught his ear which made him start and look around the room to find that he was alone, for Marie had run into her chamber, locking the door behind her, and now he could hear her raging, hysterical sobs where he stood.

The next moment he was shaking the chamber door furiously.

"Here, open this! Marie, Marie!" he said, angrily; but there was no response. He shook the door again and again, but it would not give way, neither could he elicit any reply.

He stood for an instant then, crushing the note in both hands before setting his teeth fast, and serving it as he had done the other, tearing it bit by bit into fragments to scatter upon the floor. A minute after, he had made another ineffectual attempt to open the bed-room door, and then seized his hat and rushed from the house.

As the door closed, pale and agitated, her eyes swollen with weeping, Madame Rivière entered the room, listened for a moment to the descending hurried steps, and then posted herself, mournful and heartbroken, at the window, to see her husband tearing across the street. The next moment, however, he was lost to her sight.

IN FANTI LAND.—IV.

A BROAD stream of water flowed at the foot of the hill on which the kroom where we had to pass the night was situated; and a rustic bridge, composed of large trees felled and lying over it, was the only means of crossing, as it was above four feet deep, having been swollen by some recent floods. We all had a luxurious bathe in the stream, whose coolness refreshed us after the long and unusual walk we had taken. The bottom was a coarse sand, mixed with triturated quartz; and particles of mica glittering here and there all betokened the existence of that yellow metal so much desired, and

which has given its name to the part of the Coast we were on then. Reluctantly we quitted the water, as a messenger from Mr. Bartels came down to summon us to dinner.

The kroom was a very pretty one, each house standing by itself in a kind of garden—a most unusual arrangement in Africa. Large trees—silk cotton, odoom, and cedar—surrounded the outskirts, and snowy egrets in great numbers dotted the dark green foliage. The sun's last rays were tinging with a glorious lustre the panes of the windows in Mr. Bartels' cottage, and falling on the golden hilts of two swords of state that were borne by some natives, who, just apparently arrived from a long journey, were speaking to our host.

It was evidently a matter of some importance, for his usually good-humoured countenance was clouded and grave as he listened to what the messengers were saying. As we approached, he turned to me and said—

"You will have some hot work before you, I fear, soon. There is every probability of an Ashanti invasion."

"Indeed!" was my reply. "I should consider his Majesty of Ashanti as my best friend if he will only afford us the chance of seeing some service and taking Kumasi."

"Hush!" said a Dutch officer. "These messengers are listening, and may understand you. An Ashanti war is a more serious matter than you think. If they ever undertake it in real earnest, you cannot, brave as your soldiers are, stand against the influences of the climate and the difficulties of the country your operations will have to be carried on in. I have been to Kumasi, and no troops can ever force the barrier of hills that lies near Lake Echui. Thus the capital is safe against any advance from Cape Coast, and the armies that the King can raise in case of his country being invaded are incalculable. Then, again, you cannot exist in the country about Doonqua, or in Assin—it is too unhealthy."

As he spoke, the messengers appeared to have finished their conversation with Mr. Bartels; and shaking hands with him, and bowing courteously to us, they retired with a head servant of our host's and the chief of the kroom to that worthy's house.

"What is the matter, Charles?" asked the Dutch officer who had been speaking to me.

"Old Adjiman is at his tricks again,

quarrelling with Attah; and, they say, has killed some Ashantis passing near Gyadam."

"Who is Adjiman?" I asked, for I was as yet unacquainted with the history or politics of the eastern district of the Gold Coast, or that hill region where these kings held their sway.

"Adjiman, who is he? Ah, thereby hangs too long a tale to tell you fasting; the soup is on the table, and we must have something to eat before you hear the history of that renowned warrior," was the reply of the host. And so saying, he motioned to us to ascend the steps which led to the verandah which ran round his shooting lodge.

Dinner was laid on the table in a long hall. As there is no twilight of any duration in West Africa, the candles were lit, and in sconces on the walls were torches blazing, of fragrant gums, which shed a very brilliant light. Our dinner was as usual a very elaborate affair—one novelty, in the way of a soup made from fish caught in the stream we had been bathing in, with dried venison and huge snails, attracted us; but it was so fiery hot that none but our entertainer could enjoy it, and the Dutch Doctor Gramburg's face became nearly purple from trying to eat the hot peppers.

"Mein Gott, Mr. Bartels!" he gasped, "give me something to cool my tongue."

A good laugh was the only consolation he received, for the kind-hearted fellow was one on whom we all took a delight in playing jokes; but, at length, some bananas being brought, they allayed the pain caused by the fiery condiments in the soup. The meal being over, I reminded my friend of his promise to give me the history of Adjiman; and so, filling a huge goblet full of seltzer and champagne, he began a tale which shows there is romance in Africa, wild and savage as it is, to the full as interesting as any in our civilized countries. Not long after, I was brought into intimate connection with the King Adjiman himself, and could well realize the truth of the following tale.

"Adjiman," commenced the narrator, "was called early to the stool of a province which lies to the immediate south of the Lake Bourou, and its fertility and beauty are said to be something fabulous—fruits and flowers as yet unknown in Europe, or even here, are said to grow there; and I have had citrons of a size and flavour unequalled by any I before tasted sent to me by the King. The lake itself is of great extent, and teems with fish

of large size and delicious flavour. They are prized far and wide by the interior tribes, and when dried are carried to Abonny, Logho, and all those as yet unexplored regions of the Kong ranges. Adjiman's ancestors had been amongst the most renowned captains of the Ashanti kings, and their influence was great; so great, indeed, that his sister was Queen of all Akim, a gold region of great richness, and which was then tributary to the Ashanti monarch; though, since the occurrences I am about to relate, it has thrown off its allegiance, and is now under British protection.

"Adjiman was worthy of his warlike sires; and on the death of his uncle, who was the chief, he was called to the stool at the age of twenty. In the battle where his uncle, father, and many relatives perished fighting against some of the fierce tribes that inhabit the land of Ghofan, Adjiman's cool courage and sagacity changed the fortunes of the day; and he returned a victor to Kumasi, where the highest honours awaited him. He was made the King's chief captain on the northern border, though his capital and place of abode was on the shores of Lake Bouro, and not far from Salgha, on the Volta. Salgha is a city far exceeding Kumasi in size and population. A great proportion of its inhabitants are Moslems; and it is said that a race whose rites and traditions are eminently Jewish, who have red hair and light skins, dwell in the mountains not very far off. In one of his forays, the chief had captured the daughter of a great chief of one of the tribes whom he had slain in the fight close to the frontier; and according to the border fashion had taken to wife the princess, who was the captive of his bow and spear. She was, rumour reported, very beautiful; and it was even said she had been journeying with her father to Kumasi in the hope of attracting the favour of the King himself, when the chief surprised the party, slaying all the males and taking the softer sex prisoners.

"The captive princess seems rather to have liked the summary wooing of her spouse, and to have preferred being his head wife to the precarious tenure of life and dignity she would have held at Kumasi, where the King changes his wives with the different phases of the moon, and too frequently either shortens them by a head if they displease him, or exports them to foreign lands, disposing of them to the Por-

tuguese slave dealers who inhabit the region about the mouth of the Volta and down to Whydah. Adjiman was now in the full blaze of his fame, and at the zenith of his power; so as a matter of course he had amongst his numerous dependants a few secret enemies, who were jealous of his wealth and power. Thus, by these traitors, an exaggerated account of the beauty of his new spouse was taken to Kumasi; the means by which the chief had gained her were also made known; and the mind of the monarch was fired with anger, and a desire aroused for the beautiful wife who had been ravished from him by his captain. To desire and to possess are usually synonymous with the Ashanti monarch; but in this case it was considered necessary to go very carefully, and a complimentary message was sent to Adjiman to invite him to the capital, where fresh honours awaited him. It was said that the princess was something of a magician, and that she foretold to her husband his certain death if he ventured thither. Certain it is, that the chief, who had never before hesitated to obey his master's behest, now delayed accepting the invitation until a more peremptory message came to order his attendance. With this command he promised compliance—first asking permission to make custom and to sacrifice to his fetish at the sacred mount by Lake Echui. The King of Ashanti is himself the Great Fetish and High Priest of that strange belief in Western Africa. He could not, therefore, refuse his servant's request, as it would have been to cast discredit on his order. So the messengers were ordered to remain with Adjiman to escort him to the capital; and the chief, his mind being made up, and all preparations completed, set out with a chosen band of followers and his beautiful wife, apparently for Kumasi.

"With a heavy but determined heart, he looked his last on the silver waters of the lake, by whose shores he had been born, and where he had grown up to manhood. Strange incantations were performed, and human victims are said to have been offered up at an altar one night ere they left; and then, with a large portion of his worldly wealth, intended as an offering to his King, their march commenced. The route lay in a south-westerly direction, and as soon as the chief neared the capital a force was marched in his rear to cut off his retreat from Bouro. The fetish rights and customs were com-

pleted at Echui, and Adjiman was expected to enter Kumasi in a few days. All was prepared for the execution of the chief as soon as he should enter the King's presence.

"The fatal parrot's nest, with its eggs, the signal of instant death to an African chief, as the black bull's head was of yore in Scotland, was prepared, covered with a cloth, to greet him; and the warriors who were to slaughter his adherents were told off in readiness. His beautiful wife now aided him again. She had impressed the minds of the messengers, who were acting as spies and guards over Adjiman's acts, with a firm belief in her power; and just as they were about to start, she sent a messenger to tell them of an enormous nugget of gold in a spot between the Lake Echui and the Bosompra. To obtain this it was required that a fresh delay should take place; and by the interest of the messengers, who represented favourably of her power, the necessary time was allowed. Other messengers and slaves arrived in Adjiman's camp, with messages and presents: these were to take charge of the nugget and convey it to the capital. The nugget was found as reported, and the tales of its size and beauty filled Kumasi with wonder and delight. The princess was more than ever desired. At length the day came when all were to enter the capital. The executioner and his assistants were ready. A feast was prepared, and the King's nuptial chamber decked to receive his head spouse. The day wore on; but no Adjiman came, no princess gladdened their eyes, no messengers told their tale, no nugget arrived. Night closed, and a great horror fell over all the city. Victims were slaughtered to invoke the fetish, and in the streets of Kumasi headless corpses lay in sickening profusion. At length, as morning dawned, the captain of the guard set forth with a large following on the road to Echui; and midway he fell in with two men, whose faces bleeding from recent gashes, their heads earless, betokened a fearful tragedy.

"Their tale was heavier even than the nugget they had expected to bring back. As they were about raising it from the pit where it was discovered, they had been attacked by Adjiman and his people, the principal messengers' heads cut off to ornament his war drums; and Adjiman, surprising the guards of the pass to the Pira from Lake Echui, had slain them all, and marched, it was sup-

posed, to take refuge with his sister, the Queen of Akim.

"The luckless wretches whom Adjiman, after mutilating, had spared to convey these tidings to Kumasi, were immediately executed on reaching the presence of the King; and orders were given for an instant levy of all the forces in the empire to follow and slay the rebel who had so insolently dared the power of his master. The massacres in Kumasi were frequent. The death horns sounded, and the drums beat all day long. A chief and his followers were sent to Bourou to destroy the town and take the people captives; but, to their surprise, they found the place deserted, and the inhabitants gone, having burnt their houses and laid waste all their plantations. They had escaped down the Volta, and, crossing the Quahou range, joined their chief in Akim.

"The King's rage was intense; and at length, after sacrificing some hundreds of wretched victims, he set forth with his own guards to attack Gyadam, where Adjiman was reported to have fixed his residence. The Queen, his sister, had only yielded allegiance to the Ashantis so long as Adjiman, her brother, was in favour; and she now gladly seized the opportunity of bidding them defiance. Ajadam, or Gyadam, is a position of great natural strength; and the military skill of Adjiman and his warlike followers made it still stronger.

"The princess, too, born in the Kong mountains, rich in minerals, aided them very much; and she discovered great deposits of gold, whose existence had been as yet unsuspected in that spot. It was on a Saturday—a hitherto auspicious day—that the King and his followers, after some slight successes over a body of Akims and Bourous, advanced to the Bosompra. Flushed with victory, they were moving swiftly on, when as they entered the river the forest was lighted up on every side with lurid flashes of musketry; from the tree-tops poisoned arrows rained down on them, and a troop of Amazons dashed into the stream towards the King's hammock. His guards in advance fought bravely, but were cut down to a man; and when the hammock bearers turned to fly, to their consternation they found their master was no longer in his hammock. Some terrified wretches, who had been crouching in the bushes that grow by the riverside, related afterwards how they had seen a woman of great beauty and majestic stature

carrying off a human head, which from its light colour was thought to be that of the King of Ashanti; whilst a band of females following her, bearing a body enveloped in a royal robe, disappeared in the depths of the forest. The King was never seen alive again, nor was his body ever found. His successor was too young to attempt to revenge his death at once; and the necessary customs, and then the feast of new yams coming on, gave time to Adjiman to strengthen himself, until he was enabled to bid defiance to the whole power of the Ashantis.

"One great misfortune, however, befel him, and that was the death of his princess by poison; or, as some accounts aver, she was killed in the forest, being waylaid by some emissaries from Kumasi. He mourned her long and deeply, and never married again. The spot where the King fell is rarely approached by an Ashanti; but though now overgrown with dense bush, there are long rows of mounds which show that here moulder the bodies of the warriors slain on that fatal day. At a certain time every year some of the King's principal chiefs and slaves visit the place, to pour out libations to the manes of their slaughtered monarch; slaves are sacrificed, and large supplies of food and wine are laid in the forest, in case the spirit of the King may chance to revisit the scene of his untimely death."

So ended the Hermit; and we thanked him for his very interesting account of Adjiman.

A couple of years after, when ordered to Akim to protect this very chief against the Ashanti, I happened to halt near the Pira, and close to the very spot where this conflict took place; and I visited it by stealth one night, during the glimpses of the pale moon. It was a place admirably fitted for such a tragedy, and the ground was thickly strewn with skulls and human bones; whilst a fetish house, with an altar supported on the horns and heads of wild cattle, stood in a cleared space. On this was placed some bottles of wine and rum, with kaukee, and a small packet of gold dust. A foetid smell betokened the presence of mouldering relics of humanity, and graves scattered about showed that the spot where we stood had been drenched in human blood.

We were all tired out; and as the night was advanced now, we gladly retired to our grass hammocks, which were swung in the verandah for coolness, and slept well till

early dawn. Early next morning we were all stirring. The Ashanti messengers came to pay their devoirs to Mr. Bartels, as they were about starting for Elmina to see the Governor on certain matters of state, and possibly to purchase powder and guns to augment the stores always kept in Kumasi—the consumption of those articles being great, as no ceremony is complete without a certain waste of powder; and in this, surely, they only follow us and other civilized races. I could not help admiring the Ashantis, and two young girls who accompanied them were really very pretty. In Africa, men rarely travel, even on the "war palaver," without a certain number of women to cook, carry burdens, draw water, and generally minister to their creature comforts—and, indeed, the softer sex are found to be more indispensable there than in civilized Europe; but in one thing which distinguishes their fairer sisters they are lamentably deficient—that is, tending the sick. Of this most necessary accomplishment they are entirely ignorant. Excellent cooks, they turn out good dishes for those in health. True, they prepare nostrums from croton oil, &c.; but these are dangerous in the extreme for Europeans to venture on. So let none of the gallant, chivalrous gentlemen who are thronging with such avidity to offer their services to Sir Garnet Wolseley fancy that they will find Sisters of Mercy amongst the brown-skinned damsels of Western Africa. And here one word. It is rumoured that some enthusiastic ladies, having heard that in the Gabûn there is a certain number of Frenchwomen who have taken the vows of the Holy Sisterhood, are contemplating a similar experiment on the Gold Coast, and forming a society to accompany the force which is to march against Kumasi. Before they do this, I have simply to observe that they must thoroughly unsex themselves; that they must be prepared to abandon all feminine reserve or modesty; and further, that they will be despised by the African women, who will hardly attend on them. It is a peculiar fact that, whilst coloured men will attend faithfully on Europeans, no coloured woman has any feeling but dislike, contempt, and hatred towards her fairer sisters.

Western Africa, as it is at present, is no place for European ladies, even if their constitutions could bear the climate in the hills. There are other reasons why no modest woman can well go there. Some, certainly,

have lived there in the forts; but with great discomfort, and without having any attendance but that of men servants.

We found that the intelligence from Kumasi was of such a nature as to require the presence of Mr. Bartels and the Dutch officials; and learning that envoys had also been sent to Cape Coast, I judged it as well to return there without delay. It was with much regret that I gave up the prospect of one day's sport, and a couple more pleasant evenings with our friends—the Hermit in particular; but stern necessity demanded it, and so, after a luxurious breakfast, we started for the Coast. Some three miles we all travelled together; and then my hammock men struck into a path which led directly to Cape Coast. We halted for a few minutes to say adieu, to drink a parting cup of wine, and renew promises and arrangements for another merry meeting—which was never, alas! fated to take place—and then our party separated. In a couple of hours we arrived, after passing along a narrow path, over undulating ground covered with a dense bush, at the pretty mission station at Beulah. This was founded by the Rev. T. B. Freeman, at that time the head of the Wesleyan Mission in Africa. It was laid out with much taste; and it is to be regretted that the views of Mr. Freeman to induce the natives to cultivate their land, by establishing model farms in the interior, could not be carried out.

The African is prone to imitate; and once convince him that he can profit by tilling the soil, and give him a direct and open market for his produce, without the detestable influence of the needy "middle men," who are either Europeans or half-educated Africans, and he will soon produce largely. Those who are now fattening on the profits made by charging enormous prices for everything they sell, through the disinclination of the unfortunate bushman to elevate himself, or to raise more from his land than just sufficient to enable him to live, will find their occupation gone. The African knows that if he has a surplus of corn, Cassada pepper—anything, in fact, he will get a mere nothing for it; whilst the Coast trader to whom he sells it will realize a large profit. The true hindrances of the development of Western Africa have been and are certain merchants, who realize large fortunes by establishing agents as "middle men" on the different stations along the Coast. To those men they give large credit,

charging heavy prices, heavy interest, and high freights. These, in turn, put on from 100 to 150 per cent. on the first cost of their goods; and so the bushman is plundered.

To allure him to buy they give credit, and for this they charge the usual native interest of 50 per cent., whether it be for a year or a week. To enforce payment of these debts, we have hitherto, at a very useless expense, kept up forts, which have only served as debtors' prisons; and soldiers, as constables, magistrates, commandants; and have often requisitioned the presence of ships of war, when, from some outrageous acts of a merchant, the natives have risen in rebellion. To keep up this system we have been at heavy expense—have had already, in 1863, to expend half a million of money, lose many useful officers, paying pensions to their families, and lose prestige in attempting to fight the Ashantis; and we are now committed to a war, the cost of which in lives and treasure no one can limit if it is to be successfully carried through, and the result is very doubtful in any case, saving this—that if Kumasi be taken, trade on the Coast is for years at an end, and anarchy triumphant; the Fantis will be to the full as troublesome as the Ashantis; and at length, sick of the matter, our Government will abandon the Gold Coast.

Far better would it be to cede to the Ashanti King Cape Coast and Anamabor—places fatal to European life—and allow him to do a direct and general trade with England, in place of establishing a pernicious monopoly.

Open a market for barter of their produce to the interior tribes, compel the Fantis to refrain from plundering and insulting traders coming to the Coast, and the necessity for the lavish expenditure will cease. It does no good. Sir C. Adderley has shown a true estimate of how to deal with the Coast; and his able letter in the *Times* ought to place him high in the estimation of all as a statesman.

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER I.

"I leave my character behind me."—*Sheridan*.

"OH, dear Mrs. Manning, you must dine with us on the 27th, and bring your charming niece with you."

Such were the words, uttered in the

loudest and shrillest of tones, that fell on the ears of Agnes Lane as she entered the drawing-room of Heathfield Hall, after luncheon, on the 20th of June, 187— One glance sufficed to show her the utter collapse of Mrs. Manning, under the full discharge of the Brownsmith battery; so, in order to make a diversion in her aunt's favour, she dashed in with a well-planned flank movement in the shape of a piece of scandal.

"Have you heard the news, Mrs. Brownsmith?"

"Do you mean that Mrs. Jackson has a son, or that Lord Fitzgibbon has married the actress?"

"No; my news is not to be found in the first sheet of the *Times*, though I should not be surprised if it did find its way into the *Muggerford Daily Advertiser*."

"Now, my dear Miss Lane, I do not think it kind of you to keep your dear, good, amiable aunt in such a state of suspense. It is not that I care about news. No; as I told Mrs. Græme the other day, 'I thanked God I was not an Athenian, always asking after some new thing.'"

Here Mrs. Manning looked up, with a graciously feeble smile, which Agnes interpreting as "anything to get rid of this woman," said quickly, and without a stop, after the manner of school children repeating the Catechism—

"Captain Nolan has come to live at the Red House the carriage is ready John says the horses won't stand and I am off to Muggerford. Any commissions? No; then adieu."

On the sudden departure of her niece, Mrs. Manning, uttering a faint sigh of despair, sank back in her chair with a resigned look, as if prepared for the worst. But Agnes knew her ground better: she had effectually routed the enemy. Not a moment would Mrs. Brownsmith waste after hearing that the Captain Nolan whose advent had been the subject of all gossip in the neighbourhood for the last six weeks had arrived at his own house, had actually come to the very village in which she lived, passed her very gates, and she not heard of it! What would become of her reputation? Did not she know every scandal appertaining to every family within a radius of thirty miles? Did not she know how long Mr. A. stayed when he called on Mrs. B. on Monday; what dress Miss C. wore when she dined with Mrs. D. on Tuesday; and so

on, ad infinitum? And then for an old diplomatist like her to be outwitted by a captain whom nobody knew, and a little chit like Agnes Lane, was indeed adding insult to injury.

Knowing nothing more could be got out of Mrs. Manning—whom she had just succeeded in leaving stranded, high and dry, when her niece came in—she bade her a gushing but hasty farewell, and hurried off to make up for lost time.

CHAPTER II.

"My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren;
A garden, too, with scarce a tree,
And waster than a warren."—*Tennyson*.

AT the commencement of a story there are three things to be got over. Firstly, the introduction of yourself; secondly, that of the country in which your scene is laid; thirdly, that of your characters. Having suffered many things from long-winded prologues, it is my endeavour to dismiss these subjects in as few words as possible. In this object I am greatly aided by having the early life of only one personage to describe, the other characters working themselves out as this narrative proceeds.

The egotistical part being accomplished, I now come to secondly. Secondly, Heathfield House, where the Mannings had been rooted for the last ten centuries, was situated in one of the prettiest nooks of the Vale of Heath. The house stood at the narrow end of the park, which, from a bird's-eye view, presented the appearance of a prolonged triangle. It was bounded on the left-hand side by the river Heath, on turning the angle by a pine-wood, and on the third side by the King's highway—here designated the Muggerford-road; which road, when a few hundred yards from the Heath, left the park palings to continue their descent to within a few feet of its bank, while it gradually rose to cross the river by a fine five-arched bridge, beneath which also passed a private footpath leading from the hall grounds into the rectory gardens.

At the corner of the triangle where the Muggerford-road and the pine-wood met stood the lodge gates, the only entrance through which any vehicle could pass out of or in to the park. It had been the pride of the Mannings for generations not to have an entrance near the village—in fact, it had become a kind of heirloom in the family; and

though Agnes had tried hard to get the edict revoked, on this point she found her usually pliable aunt inexorable. She was too much of a Manning to give up the worship of their ancient fetishes. Had not her late husband—then much to her discomfort—driven for years every Sunday two miles in and two miles outside his park palings to church? and now death had cast a sacred charm over all his actions.

Nearly opposite the lodge gates stood the Heathfield station of the N. G. R. line. If you turn to the great arbitrator of our life, Bradshaw, you will see it is one of those places which is blessed with a letter of the alphabet before its name which is an object of unhappy puzzlement to all old maids and dire hate to all engine drivers.

The true beauty of the vale can only be seen from the foot-bridge crossing over the Heath at the corner of the triangle where the pine-wood and the river meet. Looking up its source, the river can be traced for miles—now hidden by a sudden turn, then lost for a while under the dark cloud of a manufacturing town; but ever and anon glimmering forth, until it fades from the sight in the bosom of the far-distant hills, leaving behind it a dream of better things, a glimpse of happiness yet attainable. Following its course down stream, the river presents a very different aspect. On passing under the foot-bridge, it immediately enters a narrow gorge in the rocks, where, as if maddened by their resistance, it tears, fumes, and frets at their rugged sides. Then, for a space, it grows calm, plays gently with the lichens on the rocks, caresses the waving branches as they bow their heads in its foaming waters; till at length, finding all persuasion in vain, it roars forth in fury in endless challenges to the obdurate rock.

About one mile below the foot-bridge, in bygone ages, had occurred one of those strange convulsions of nature which form the subject of so much wrangling, and cause the waste of so much pen, ink, and paper, to all local savans. The disputed phenomenon in this case was a semi-circular chasm in the rocks, 'yclept Death's Hollow, of about one hundred and forty feet in circumference and forty feet in depth, with no means of communication with the outer world save by a steep, loose, stony path, which partook so strongly of the nature of a pine-log shoot that it deterred many a one, having a biblical regard for the term of his existence, from

trying its merits. The semi-circular brink was fringed round by graceful silver birches, whose branches, mingling with those of a magnificent old oak standing in the centre of the hollow below, effectually shut out all inquisitive curiosity from above. Thus, Death's Hollow was totally free from observation on the Heathfield side, and could only be commanded from the opposite bank of the river, where the rocks—as if in sympathy with those on the other side—had broken up, making place for a miniature valley, running at right angles with the river, which here, widening out, became less deep. On this account tradition said it was used as a ford by smugglers, who found the Hollow a convenient place for stowing away their goods until a favourable night arrived, when up the barrels would be hoisted to the top of the Hollow, and there quickly transferred to the backs of a string of horses that silently awaited their mysterious burdens. Well might the aborigines be awe-struck at the fearful apparition of headless horsemen seen issuing from the woods around on moonlight nights; and such was the abject fear of the natives for the demons supposed to inhabit Death's Hollow, that its situation had never been revealed to the gloating eyes of an exciseman.

Below Death's Hollow, the river flowed on without interruption past the Hall, and under the Muggerford-road bridge. Then it was crossed by a weir, having on its right bank the remains of an old water-mill, now merely a heap of stones, with the exception of the great wooden wheel, which stood alone, a melancholy object, like Marius weeping over the glories that once had been. On the left bank stood the rectory, built over the site of an ancient monastery, between which and the river sloped down a smooth, velvety lawn, once hallowed by the holy tread of the monks as they passed to and fro, with pious words on their lips, envy in their hearts, and longing looks in their eyes cast at the little fishes swimming gaily by. The river, after swirling round the weir, and depositing on the parson's lawn all the stray sticks and straws it had swept down in its headlong course, gathered itself up for one final plunge of twenty feet, and ever after flowed on happily to the sea.

There remains now only the situation of two houses to describe, and then this survey of all the notable places in this sketch will be complete.

On the principle of having the good wine first, Islington Court, the palatial residence of Mr. Brownsmith (sleeping partner in the firm of Brownsmith and Brown, glass-blowers), will first come under notice.

This mansion—for by no less a name could it be mentioned with due respect—was situated on an eminence, and unblushingly gave to view the full expanse of its many-windowed sides. Now, as each of these windows was graced with a blind, on which was represented an appropriate subject as suited to the speciality of the room, it belonged to, the tout ensemble, as seen from the Muggerford-road, presented the appearance of a huge travelling caravan or public picture gallery, quite casting into shade the exterior of the new Pinacothek at Munich. For instance, the dining-room was indicated to the outside world by Belshazzar's Feast and Titian's Last Supper; the drawing-room by grandes dames, cavaliers, monkeys and black pages *à la* Watteau; the smoking-room by astounding eruptions of Mounts Vesuvius and Etna *à la* cigar-lights; while the upper windows, to give an idea of Arcadian bliss and soothing dreams, were entirely devoted to what is called "Italian" scenery. These unique blinds were finally got into position late on Saturday night; but their fame did not sleep, and early next morning the whole of the village of Heathfield deserted the church in a body, and proceeded with one accord to the bridge, there to gaze open-mouthed at the wonderful sight. When remonstrated with, they all declared by common consent—

"That they had yeard parson nigh on twenty year, but had never seen naught like t' new gentleman's blinds afore."

This surprising structure was enclosed, on the side of the Muggerford-road, by a castellated wall, studded with turrets, between which were pierced narrow loopholes, filled in with many-coloured glass.

A very different aspect did house number two present, standing—though far away in the fields—opposite all this modern magnificence: an old red brick place, half castle, half palace, fast mouldering away, and seemingly unable to bear the vast weight of ivy which clung to its tottering walls. This ruinous house was the ancestral home to which Captain Nolan had returned. The property, consisting now of only what had once been the park, lay around; the ring-fence of which, shorn of its goodly trees,

had become difficult to trace, being simply represented here and there by some defunct posts and rails, and a single old fir, who bowed his head in bitter woe over the dilapidated gates. The only strip of wood which had escaped the remorseless use of his ancestors—for the good reason that then the trees were not fully grown—was a fir plantation, running by the side of the river, from the bridge over the Heath on the Muggerford-road to the little valley opposite Death's Hollow. Through this plantation went a path, which, crossing the little valley, led to the foot-bridge, and so across Heathfield Park to the lodge gates. This thoroughfare, though it worked sad havoc among the pheasants on the Red House side, had always been a legitimate way, and had become the favourite walk of all Heathfield on a Sunday afternoon.

Thirdly—do not be frightened, I am not of the clerical persuasion—who is Agnes Lane? That was a question which had often puzzled and caused her much deep reflection; and so it was to-day, for as she drove slowly along to Muggerford her thoughts were busy with the past.

Her earliest remembrances went back to a long dark room, at the top of four flights of stairs, in a dingy old house in London; an old woman, always knitting, called Jane, whom she supposed to have been her nurse, since hers was the only form she could recollect in those early years, until one day there entered a tall, thin man, dressed in black, with sharp features, and a still sharper voice, who during the short time he stayed in the room managed to make Jane weep bitterly, and whom on leaving she followed to the door, and shaking her fist at his retreating figure, exclaimed—

"Ah, ye're a good-for-nothing set o' thieves. I thought yer lawyers were content with robbing the money from poor folks; but now nothing will please yer but yer mun take the childer too. Ye'll be wanting our souls next, to give to your master, the devil; but I've promised mine long ago, so don't want none of your introduction."

A few days afterwards the gentleman in black returned, and taking Agnes by the hand prepared to lead her from the room, when he was stopped by Jane throwing herself before the door, and imploring to be allowed to accompany the child. This he of the sombre suit seemed to take as rather a good joke than otherwise, and with the

nearest approach to a laugh that a face like his was capable of assuming, grated out—

"My good woman, I am not a free agent in this business—I am nothing but a machine in the hands of my employer, a mere piece of mechanism." Then, pushing Jane aside and muttering, "Nothing but a machine, ah! like one too, by Jove, require plenty of oil to work well," he hurried down to the street, where a cab was awaiting them, into which they stepped and drove quickly off, he grinning and muttering without intermission, until his intercommunion was cut short by the cab halting before what looked to the careless gazer an uninhabited house, but proved on further investigation to be a seminary for young ladies.

In a few minutes Agnes found herself in a small, narrow room. On her left stood a bookcase, containing hashed-up religion and diluted sentimentality; on her right, an old-fashioned upright piano, before which a young lady sat, diligently practising from an open piece of music; but who, on ascertaining that Agnes had entered alone, ceased playing, and turning over one side of her music, gave to view an open book bound in tell-tale yellow paper. Hardly had Agnes recovered from her astonishment, when a rustling of silk was heard, and there stalked into the room a tall, gaunt female, who, eyeing her carefully over, made a mental calculation as to her voracious powers. Being a little, pale child, with large wondering eyes and a small mouth, this bird's-eye view proved extremely favourable to Miss Stiggins's economical mind, especially as she had received into her establishment the day before a very hungry-looking pupil. Her inspection over, Miss Stiggins gave Agnes what she called a "motherly kiss," and satisfied that she had discharged her part in the introduction of a pure young spirit into a sink of corruption, handed her over to the saintly charge of the young lady at the piano, who was now so absorbed in her music that it was some seconds before Miss Stiggins could attract her attention. From the day she entered to the one on which Mrs. Manning took her away, not a shade or vision of her life at school could Agnes recall. It was to her as a dark chasm in her existence, of which nothing but a sense of pain remained. Instead of being thankful to Providence for obliterating from her mind a stage whereon so many have imbibed the

dire seeds of evil, she, like the rest of humankind, only murmured at being saved from temptation.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

WITH A DIRTY BOOT.

"CLEAN yer boots, sah? Hev a polish, sah! Shoeblack, sah!"

He said it again and again, as long as I was in hearing, and looked as red with disgust as his own scarlet slop because I went on, growling and mentally abusing the vestries that allowed that horrible puddle of mud to stand by the paving, as if expressly for me to put in one neat well-booted foot and half an inch of new trousers. I ask anybody whether, to a well-dressed man, anything can be found more vexatious than to plop one's foot into a puddle of road sweepings? Having your hat blown off is nearly as bad—very nearly; but the boot defilement carries the palm.

Five minutes after I was within the bounds of the City proper, admiring the huge, stalwart horse that was drawing a City mud-cart, horse and cart being perfect models of strength and usefulness. This very cart, with its horse and harness, I afterwards saw in Macclesfield-street, in the City-road, where the Commissioners of Sewers for the City have a wharf; but the appearance of the huge elephantine beast, with its capital harness, was enough to attract me then; and it led me on, as I saw the mud scraped up, into wondering what became of it, and I said, "I'll go and see."

In the order of going, I began to take more notice of the muddy streets; and to see that, though dirty, the efforts made to clear away the mud were very great. It had been raining, and boys were busy removing the liquid mud from the pavement with those india-rubber scrapers known as squeegees; while every here and there were men with brooms and scoops loading other great carts, drawn by more elephantine horses—certainly, among the noblest beasts I ever saw; and smaller carts, in charge of lads, were by the pillar-posts that are not used for letters, but patronized by those boys who, armed with shovel and broom, are always playing at being run over in the middle of the streets.

My journey was to Macclesfield-street, and here I was received by a portly, businesslike manager, who was nothing loth to

tell me how London streets were kept clean—no light task, he said, for he had fifty miles of streets in our filthy, restless City. He told me, moreover, that the task used to be performed by vestry management, but was now under the sole control of the City Commissioners. And what a task! to clear away the dirt and ashes from the many households, vegetable and refuse from markets, and the mud and droppings of the streets.

I was by no means surprised to hear that the work was constantly going on, night and day, and round about me were the members of the staff which performed the duties. Out in the yard were carts emptying ashes into great heaps, and these ashes were being sorted and sifted over into soft core, or loose rubbish that would burn; hard core, consisting of clinker, slate, broken glass, and earthenware, and the various hard odds and ends thrown into the dusthole, this being used for road making; and breeze, the cinders and ashes—these two last being loaded into barges for use away along the canal in brick-making. For this waterway opens up communication far and wide, and the cinders and ashes sifted here may before very long be in a brickyard in Norfolk or Lincolnshire. But who can say where the winds will carry the smoke of tons of "soft core" that is burnt—vile, evil-smelling rubbish that fumes and rises in black coils under the purifying influence of the fire? It is a wonderful collection, that in a dustbin; and curious things do the women and children employed pick out—waste substances we call them, little thinking how they are utilized; for amongst these refuse matters are found bones, grease, hair, paper, old metal, and many more unclassifiable matters that are familiar as merchandize to the marine store man.

In cleansing the City these scavengers, whose head-quarters are at Macclesfield-street, do not confine themselves to the dustbins, for by an enactment to meet the difficulties of spots where space is limited, householders are allowed to place the dust outside their doors by eight each morning in some suitable vessel, which is emptied, and the contents carried away to the yard, where scores of busy hands are ready to sort and sift, accumulation not being allowed.

Under sheds were rows of the great handsomely made carts, of which about eighty are in use. In stables were about a score of

the staff of eighty great horses, well-fed and groomed, and evidently enjoying the afternoon rest. And very proud my conductor seemed of these horses—something new for the occupants of dust or mud carts, they being noble fellows, who had cost the Commissioners about seventy pounds apiece.

There were men going off duty and men coming on; for the work, as before said, is carried on night and day. In fact, in some parts of the City, night is the only time when it would be possible for the men to sweep the streets.

Let us have a few words now about this street-sweeping, a practice which many readers might be ready to look upon as never performed, forgetting what would be the state of the streets were it omitted. Let them open their eyes on hearing that upwards of fifty thousand tons of this are annually carted out of the City under the management of the Commissioners; and this is only the City, a very small part of great London town.

"Where does the mud come from?" some one may say. Who can tell? Here are some of its sources: the black rained down from the chimneys, the powder ground off the paving-stones by iron-armed hoofs and wheels, and the iron ground off the horse-shoes and wheels by the paving-stones; the soil from the interstices between the stones, and, where the road is macadamized, that macadamization wholesale. But the great source is from below, from the pits, holes, and trenches when the "street is up" for gas pipe mending, for water pipe laying, or for the rearrangement of the telegraph wires. This is the great supplier of London mud, which is carried off and ground into an impalpable powder, and then stirred, with the help of rain, and the soot, iron, and stone dust, into that famous sticky paste known as London mud.

Sweep—sweep—sweep, at this London mud, which is scooped into the big carts and carried off to a wharf on the river, where it goes with the manure collected to the market gardens here and there—fine fertilizing stuff for aiding the growth of vegetables.

Valuable, then, this mud and manure, and ash and cinder? Ye-e-es, to a certain extent. Saleable all of it; but there is such a vast amount of sheer useless rubbish to collect as well, which nobody will buy, and nobody will have, that the one counterbalances the other: this last being so valueless that the

Commissioners have to pay people to receive it. Then there is the cost of collection. Here are a few facts picked up on the subject, casually of course.

I have already said that I am only dealing with the City itself, and I have also said that there are eighty carts and eighty horses in use. Figures these; but I am not going to frighten the reader with many statistics. Only eighty such horses as may be seen any day going about the City in the great City sewer carts, cannot cost far short of eighty pounds per week for their keep—they look too much the equine gentlemen to live on less.

Then, to keep all these horses and carts busy, there are about three hundred and fifty scavengers, whose wages amount to nearly two hundred and fifty pounds, the smallness of the amount being explicable by the fact that a great number of them are boys and youths. What do you think of this for a week's scraping, sweeping, and shovelling up? Surely the City must be a little cleaner for it. Five hundred loads of manure and mud-slush, half water no doubt; six hundred loads of dustbin and trade refuse. No light collection this, and for one week only.

Men don't like to be scavengers. Not only is it a dirty business, but it has a bad look. There is a certain amount of pride in every man, and this street-sweeping used to have a workhousey, parish relief air about it that able-bodied men did not like; but they are getting over it fast, for the wages are pretty good and the work regular. For the City is a fearfully dirty monster, and requires ceaseless attention even to make him passably clean. Boys form the larger part of the staff, and begin work as dirty, ragged urchins, thin, wan, and weak, to grow, under the feeding, training, and wholesome dirty occupation, sturdy youths, muscular lads, and eventually fine young men to recruit the staff of full-grown scavengers. Ragged school boys they are principally; and they come here to begin work with shovel and brush in amongst the horses' legs, or scavenging the mud off the pavements and asphalt. Five shillings per week is the starting salary, with the right to a dip in the copper every morning—the dip being a gratuitous pint of hot cocoa. They like it, too; for about a hundred of the young dogs indulge in it every morning before going off to work. Ragged scholars they are; but they soon clothe themselves in serge frock, leggings,

stout boots, and shiny hat, these being supplied to the boys as they can pay for them out of a store at the wharf, and charged to them at wholesale price.

I wanted to find out that some of the young rascals were run over and hospitalized; but it seems that they have a sort of charmed life, like the sparrows, and they dodge in and out amongst wheels and horses' legs as if they were dirty snow flakes so charged with electricity of a repellent nature that they are always kept at a distance from all that would do them harm. They get splashed, though, to the eyes and hair—great mud splashes, which they rub out of their eyes and into their hair, so that certainly they are not cleanly of aspect. I might say more upon this point, were it needful, which it is not.

Pay night is the time for visiting the wharf, when you learn how truthful is the adage that dirty work brings clean money. Then the yard is clean swept, the horses are bedded down, the carts brushed and standing in rows, with their shafts sticking upwards, like the prong horns of some huge monster, half demon, half machine; there is a pleasant rattle of halter chains, and a familiar snort from the stables; and the men, tired though they be, are inclined to be facetious and light-hearted with the idea of being paid. In fact, I hear twice over, references to "that there pot o' heavy."

Here is the office, with clerks, desks, and big books. There is a great counter, too, full of shallow drawers; and as these are drawn out, one sees that they are full of little holes, into each of which there has been counted out a week's wages—the boy's, the aforesaid five shillings, and the man's thirty, with plenty of gradations between.

There is a sick fund, too, for a man was away ill, and that's a bad time for the worker who suffers, and knows as well that the bread winning is stayed for those around him; but here comes in the fund, and our friend who is away ill gets one-half his wages, fifteen shillings—no little help in so sore a time.

But I am leaving the mud, and so return to it, for it is a sort of Irish difficulty to deal with. Still, much is being done. The asphalt helps wonderfully, from the ease with which it may be cleansed. Arrangements have been made for flushing it with water, and then a course of the ingenious squeegee frees it from the horrible sticky, pasty mud, which defiles everything it

touches. Tunnels, too, for pipes are being made; and if these and other plans can be contrived for keeping the streets intact, it is possible that the time may come when our ways will be really clean. One might suggest that all horses should be compelled to wipe their shoes before entering the City, but that would be of no avail if we are always digging and delving. But many of the streets are dirty, must be dirty; and we can only go back to the statement that fifty thousand tons of dirt are annually carted away. True; but that pool of mud lay ready for me to insert my boot, and—

Ah, but that was not within the City bounds.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XL.

WHAT could I say? The old gentleman felt aggrieved and hurt, and justly so; and any comment on my part would but have served to make matters worse, and widen the breach which evidently existed between father and daughter; so I held my peace, and the baronet continued—

"I have the deepest affection for the memory of my lamented Martha; but that feeling, I think, is not incompatible with the desire I have formed, and have expressed to you, of forming a new alliance. I shall provide handsomely for my daughter out of my Australian property. Would you speak to the lady before consulting her parents, doctor?"

"Yes, Sir John, I would."

"Hem! I hardly know what to do. It will be better to have some conversation with the vicar, or Lady Georgina, in the first instance, I think. But, hem! we shall see. What do you say, doctor?"

"I dare say the plan you propose will be more satisfactory," I replied. "It will save you the pain of a refusal, at all events, Sir John, supposing—which I do not imagine to be the case—the young lady's affections should be pre-engaged."

"They are not—you think they are not, doctor?"

"I have no reason to suppose they are at present, Sir John."

"Never mind," exclaimed the baronet,

drawing himself up to his full height, and expanding his chest to the utmost—"faint heart—you know the rest, doctor? Good morning. I shall acquaint you with the result. Good morning."

And the old gentleman walked off with head erect and elastic step, and actually humming some antiquated tune!

Positively he had, as he said himself, taken a new lease of his life.

It was really a pitiable sight to look upon Sir John Middleton's face when he returned, according to promise, to relate the result of his proposal to Miss St. Clair.

For, strange as it may appear, in spite of his fortune, in spite of his baronetcy, in spite of the entreaties of her father, and the hysterically enunciated commands of her mother, Miss St. Clair had refused the owner of thirty thousand a year and diamonds without number; and, moreover, had resolutely declined to render any reason to her parents for so doing.

It was incomprehensible! So thought the Rev. Rupert and the Lady Georgina.

Immediately after his interview with me, Sir John had driven over to the vicarage, where his unexpected arrival caused no little flutter among the inmates.

Tossing the reins to his groom, the baronet descended from his mail phaeton with a display of activity that would have done credit to a much younger man.

The domestic ushered the baronet into the room which I have already described, where he was left alone for quite fifteen minutes, while the Lady Georgina and her two daughters made themselves ready to receive him.

The young ladies were first dressed, and proposed descending to the drawing-room; but this their mother would by no means permit.

Everything has an ending—in this world at least—and her ladyship's toilet having been at length completed, she presented herself, clothed in amber satin, and, waving a highly scented cambric pocket handkerchief, expressed herself delighted to see him.

"I am so sorry to have kept you waiting, Sir John; but in a house like this there is always so much to be attended to."

"Do not mention it, pray," exclaimed the baronet, gallantly. "I have been much interested by your birds and flowers."

"It is so kind of you to say so, Sir John."

What magnificent conservatories you have at Ardmore!"

"Hem—yes," replied the baronet. "My gardener knows his business, and, like myself, takes an interest in the Australian Flora, which I hope to possess complete in a year or two; but I am certain we have nothing to show equal to that salmon-coloured geranium of yours; it is truly a magnificent specimen."

"Oh, Sir John, you flatter."

"Not I. I am a plain-spoken man, and have come over thus early expressly to have some private conversation with Mr. St. Clair."

"Dear me, how provoking! I am so sorry; but Rupert has just gone out, and where to I am sure I cannot tell. Perhaps the girls may know."

Whereupon her ladyship made as though she would have risen from the couch upon which she had sunk in a graceful and oft-studied attitude; but the baronet anticipated her non-intention, exclaiming—

"Permit me, Lady Georgina," and pulled the bell.

"Thank you, Sir John, I am so much obliged."

The young ladies, who were patiently waiting for orders on the stairs, soon made their appearance, dressed with more pretension than good taste.

When the ceremony of saluting the baronet had been gone through—by Miss St. Clair in a languid, don't-much-care-about-it sort of manner, and by Miss Augusta with a trifle too much empressment—the Lady Georgina inquired of the former if she knew where her papa had gone.

"I don't believe he has gone out yet, mamma. I think he is still in the study," opined Miss St. Clair.

"No, Louisa, I'm sure he is out in the yard with Murphy. I heard him say that Jenny was ill, and tell Tom to go for the cow-doctor."

Here his reverence returned, redolent of farmyard perfume, and looking more like a burly cultivator of the soil than a clerical gentleman and the husband of a lady in her own right.

"Ah, Sir John!" he exclaimed, as he shook the baronet's hand with a degree of warmth and vivacity that made that gentleman wince, "glad to see you. How is Miss Middleton? You'll stay and take pot-luck with us—eh? I've just broached a new cask of

sherry—Louisa, my dear, ring for some glasses."

"Not for me, Mr. St. Clair, thank you," hastily interposed the baronet; "I never take wine in the daytime."

"Tut, tut! we are just going in to lunch, Sir John," said the vicar, "and you may as well come with us as stay here by yourself. Will you take in Georgina?"

The baronet offered his arm, and had the honour of conducting her ladyship into the dining-room, where she performed prodigies of valour among the viands on the table; for they breakfasted early, and were always ready for the supplementary repast they called lunch, but which was in reality an early dinner, though they professed to dine at six.

"I am really distressed," presently exclaimed the vicar—"really distressed, Sir John, to see you fasting while we feast."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. St. Clair," replied the baronet; "but I neither eat nor drink except at regular hours—my regular hours. I am forced to live by rule."

"Well, my dears," observed the vicar to his wife and daughters when they had returned to the drawing-room, "you have not yet decided what you are going to do this afternoon."

"I should like to ride in to see Mrs. Cochrane," said Miss St. Clair; "but Richard said he was going out."

"Very well, my dear," replied her father; "I'll see if I can get the mare for you. I dare say Richard's business will wait till to-morrow."

"I dare say it won't," said Augusta, with an arch look, and in an undertone.

"What is that you say, Augusta?" demanded her mother.

"Nothing, ma," replied the young lady, rather perty.

"You did speak, Augusta; don't dare tell me you did not. You know how I hate whispering. Speak out, if you have anything to say. Why do you suppose Richard's business cannot be deferred until to-morrow?"

"Because he is going to see Miss Mulholland."

"Nonsense, child!"

"Are you not going anywhere, Miss Augusta?" blandly inquired the baronet, in order to effect a diversion and put a stop to the half wrangling, half bantering talk that jarred so painfully upon his nerves.

"Not unless you will take me somewhere," replied the young lady, boldly looking the baronet straight in the face.

Sir John pretended not to hear; whereupon Augusta walked away in disgust, muttering "Old fool!" in what she meant to be an inaudible tone, but which, nevertheless, distinctly reached the ears of the baronet, already not too well prepossessed in her favour.

Notwithstanding her dress, Louisa looked very well that morning; for her colour, usually exuberant, was toned down, and her hair, which she habitually wore hanging loose down her back, she had gathered into massive coils upon her head, where a white camellia contrasted tastefully with the dark-brown of her abundant tresses. Her natural vivacity, too, had given place to a quieter mood, which was far more becoming; so that the baronet, who was an admirer of beauty in repose, became more deeply enamoured than ever, and took his leave of the ladies, after requesting the favour of a few minutes' private conversation with the vicar.

"Come to my study, Sir John;" and the baronet signifying his consent, Mr. St. Clair led the way to the apartment which was dignified by the name of "Papa's study."

"All I have to say, Mr. St. Clair, can be expressed in a very few words."

"Very well," replied the vicar; "now, what can I do for you?"

"Just this," returned the baronet, fumbling uneasily with his bunch of seals. "Really, if any one had told me I should ever do what I am going to do to-day, I would have said he was a lunatic—I would, indeed."

"What is that, Sir John?"

"Well, Mr. St. Clair, the fact is, I—ah—I am anxious to get married."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the vicar, sitting down in his easy-chair, overcome by surprise—"indeed, Sir John, I am perfectly astonished! Why, you are an older man than I am, by ever so many years, I dare say."

"Yes, I suppose I am, Mr. St. Clair; but will you be displeased when I tell you that the young lady who has—ahem!—who has—"

"Captivated your heart, eh, Sir John?" suggested Mr. St. Clair, with a smile.

"Ah, yes, if you like—is—ahem!—your—ah—eldest daughter."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the vicar, starting to his feet, and grasping the baronet's

hand in a frenzy of amazement and gratification; "you do me high honour, Sir John!"

"Pooh, pooh! Then I may count upon your consent?"

"Count upon it, Sir John? My dear sir," exclaimed the excited clergyman, "I am but too delighted."

"And Lady Georgina?"

"Will be equally delighted, I know."

"And—ah—Miss St. Clair? Do you think—"

"Do I think, Sir John? Of course—of course," here the vicar squeezed the baronet's hand so vehemently that that gentleman winced. "I beg your pardon, Sir John; excuse my warmth, which you will readily understand. One moment, I shall be back directly."

And without waiting for an answer, Mr. St. Clair rushed off to communicate the astounding intelligence to his wife and daughters.

"A title, too!" he exclaimed aloud, in a transport of delight, as he burst into the sitting-room with a noise that equally surprised and distressed his wife. "My dear, Sir John Middleton has proposed for Loo."

"What?" screamed her ladyship, fairly aroused. "Say that again, Rupert."

"Don't agitate yourself, my love; but Sir John has this instant proposed to me to marry Louisa."

"Just think of it!" exclaimed Lady Georgina, "why, he has thirty thousand a year, at least. Of course they will have a house in Portland-place, or Eaton-square, or somewhere in London. Where is Louisa?"

"I thought she was with you, my dear."

"Yes, to be sure. She has just gone to dress herself for a walk. Ring for Sarah or Catherine, or some one, any one—do."

The vicar hastened to obey his wife's orders, and gave such an impulse to the bell that both the servants came running to know what had happened.

"Desire Miss St. Clair to come to me directly."

"If you please, Lady Georgina, Miss St. Clair and Miss Augusta have gone out just this moment."

"How provoking! Which way have they gone?"

"Towards the schoolhouse, your ladyship."

"Run after them directly, Sarah, and tell Miss St. Clair to come back immediately."

"What has happened?" inquired Miss St.

Clair of her father and mother, in a tone more indicative of relief than annoyance, when she had returned from her interrupted walk.

"My dear—" began her father.

"Rupert, leave it to me—do," interrupted Lady Georgina. "On an occasion like the present it is a mother's duty to break the news to her daughter."

"What are you talking about, mamma?"

"My dear Louisa, a gentleman has—"

"Rupert, will you be quiet?" exclaimed her ladyship, in anger; and continued, addressing her daughter, "Yes, my child, a gentleman has asked your hand in marriage."

Louisa crimsoned; but, with wonderful composure, asked—

"What is the gentleman's name?"

"Guess, my love."

"No, mamma, I will not guess; if you do not choose to tell me, don't."

"How would you like to be called 'my lady?'" queried the mother, in her most insinuating style.

"That would depend upon who 'my lord' might be," archly replied Miss St. Clair.

"What would you say to Sir John Middleton?" continued her ladyship.

"Thank goodness!" exclaimed Louisa, "there is no chance of his asking me, at any rate."

"But I say there is, my dear," cried her mother; "and what is more, it is quite certain, for Sir John has asked your papa's leave to pay his addresses to you."

"The old idiot!"

"Louisa!" expostulated the father.

"Louisa!" shrieked the mother, "I insist upon your accepting the baronet's offer at once."

"Mamma, I will not," replied Louisa, firmly, "I never will. Nothing on earth shall make me marry an old fellow like that, who might be my grandfather. I'd sooner go into a convent, or beg my bread, or go out as a governess."

"Undutiful child!" exclaimed Lady Georgina, falling back, in a semi-comatose condition, among her cushions.

"My dear Loo," pleaded the vicar, "think of the splendid position you are offered, and all the good it would enable you to do."

"No, papa, I won't think of it—I don't want to think of it."

"But, my dear—"

"For shame, papa, to want to sell me for fortune and position!"

"My dear, my dear!" returned the father, "you ought to know me better than to suppose such a thing. Sir John is an estimable, worthy man, and a good man to boot; if it were not so, I would not urge you—I would not even have mentioned the offer to you, darling; no, indeed!"

"Unnatural child!" sobbed the mother, "you want to break my heart."

"No, mamma; but I have no intention of allowing you to force me into taking a step that would certainly have that effect upon me."

Lady Georgina made an angry reply; but the vicar interposed, speaking to both wife and child—

"Let us have no wrangling, my dears—pray let us have no wrangling. Georgina, let us manage this matter; and you, Louisa, listen to reason, my dear."

"Yes, papa, I am quite ready to listen to reason; but I have not heard any yet from either of you, about this matter."

"How dare you fly in your mother's face, miss?" asked her ladyship, in much ire, and sitting bolt upright on her sofa.

"My dear, my dear!" remonstrated the vicar. Then, turning to his daughter—"This is a very serious question, Louisa, and I wish you to give it due consideration. All I want you to do, at present, is to receive Sir John, hear what he has to say, and give him such answer as your reason and conscience may dictate. Heaven forbid that I should force you to marry him, or any one, against your will, my daughter."

Louisa made no reply; but the tears rolled down her cheeks, and she covered her face with her hands.

"Well, miss," presently demanded the mother, with much asperity, "what answer have you to make to your father and me?"

Louisa turned round, and looked her mother full in the face.

"I will not marry that foolish old man; and you are unkind, mamma, to wish to force me into taking him against my will."

"You—you have taken up with some one else," exclaimed her ladyship, beside herself with rage.

"My dear, my dear!" pleaded the vicar, "pray, control your"—"temper" he was going to say, but bethought him in time, and substituted "feelings"—"pray control your feelings. Louisa, you must see Sir John. When you have heard what he has to say for himself, you can give him what answer

you please; but I insist upon your seeing and hearing him."

"Very well, papa—as you please."

The vicar offered his arm to his wife, who thereupon rose from among the cushions, and leaning heavily on her husband's arm, suffered herself to be led, in silence, from the room.

They proceeded towards the study, where they found Sir John gazing vacantly at the books on the vicar's shelves.

TABLE TALK.

HOW does Mr. Lloyd manage about his famous Angora cat which has just been exhibited at the Crystal Palace Show? Does she have the run of the aquarium, and has she been trained to the same love of the fishy world possessed by her master? There is hope for everybody, since even a cat may attain celebrity. The report says that this "famous Angora, which has been thought worthy of an enlarged photograph, and of which the following brief biography is circulated in the Palace, was 'Born in Paris, April 7th, 1860; came to London, November 18th, 1861; travelled thence to Hamburg, and is now finally settled down in Lower Norwood. Her life-size portrait is published at her own expense, out of the money she has gained in prizes, and she has been thought worthy of two eulogistic stanzas by Frederick Lockyer. N.B.—The visitor to inquire for Mim.'" Pretty pussy!

IT SEEMS THAT the mouse that was known to be in the mountain has at last publicly crept out. We allude to the chess automaton at the Crystal Palace, which has at last unfolded its mystery. It has, however, been long known that the older chess automatons were not at all automatic, but depended for their motion upon a clever player concealed inside. It would not, of course, be an impossibility to construct a figure which should play a good single game of chess; but then, when wound up or set going, it would always play the same game, making precisely the same movements, irrespective of those taken by its adversary. No mechanism could supply brain; and it has been so long self-evident that the automaton was moved by human agency that it was hardly needed, the other day at the Palace, for the youth to be shown who played the part of brains. It is not so

very long since that a friend played the Palace automaton, and during the game its mechanism was so much out of order that it sneezed twice. It was evidently suffering from congestion or a cold in its cogs.

AN ADVERTISEMENT STATES that during the Tichborne trial, "by order of the Chief Justice, the court is purified daily with 'Chlorozone.'" Has this new form of ozone, then, an effect upon the moral atmosphere? for, certainly, looking at the evidence of the witnesses, one side or the other must be indulging in a few of those figures of speech known as "tarradiddles." It is pleasant to know, then, that the atmosphere will be purified. Some people might like to try it at home. Mem.—This is not meant ill-naturedly.

THERE IS SOMETHING very near akin to a strike going on amongst the milk-sellers, apropos of the late prosecutions. They have had a meeting; and a gentleman who occupied the chair, in opening the proceedings, said "rents had increased, the price of cattle had increased, wages had increased, and dairy expenses had altogether increased about 50 per cent. They had better take the bull by the horns at once, and increase the price of milk to 6d. per quart for that sold out of doors, and 5d. per quart for that sold indoors." Now, there is no doubt that we often get bull beef from our butchers; but we had no idea that taking the bull by the horns would have any influence on the milk. The popular fallacy has been that we had a great deal of our milk from a certain cow with an iron tail. But, of course, the dairyman must know best; so let it be bull.

WE ARE REQUESTED to mention, with respect to our article "A Dweller in Tents," in No. 296, that "the large marquee or pavilion used for the ball to the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood, and also for the servants' ball, at Duncombe Park, was supplied, complete in every respect, by Mr. Benjamin Edgington." The error arose from the fact of there being two ball-tents upon the ground.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation. Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf. Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 303.

October 18, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
AN UNFRIENDLY CALL.



ON leaving home, there was a furious rage brewing in Rivière's heart as he hurried along by-street after by-street, avoiding mechanically the great artery bearing the name of Oxford, till he turned into Grosvenor-square, where he paused for a few moments, to gather breath and collect his thoughts, which were scattered by the furious tempest of passion raging within him. Plans

he had none: his only purpose was to confront Lawler, take him by the throat and half strangle him, and then to lash him till he consented to give him the satisfaction of a gentleman. For what had he done?—what had he not done? Had he not by his letter destroyed all hope, when there was a prospect of a better future? Had he not by his base accusations almost overturned the reason of Marie, and made her believe her husband to be a libertine and scoundrel? The recollection of the old insult came up once more, stronger than ever, to fan Rivière's rage, as he hurried along one side of the square, and reached the house just as a child, whom he recognized as Lady Lawler's, was led by the nurse into the house.

He paused for a few moments as the sight of the little one recalled the face of the

mother; and for an instant he shrank from his purpose. She was a good, kind-hearted woman: it would trouble her, this visit of his.

What of his own wife, then—had she been spared?—had she not been driven almost frantic by the treatment he had received?

He waited no longer, but thundered at the door, which was thrown open by one of the colossi in livery, another and Mr. Sellars the butler standing close behind, it being near the season when callers might be expected.

"I wish to see Sir Richard Lawler," exclaimed Rivière, and he stepped forward as if to enter; but the footman was immediately supported by his fellow, the two filling up the doorway.

"Sir Richard aint at home," said one of them, insolently.

"When will he be at home?" asked Rivière, sharply.

"Don't know. Not for a week—p'raps not for a month."

"Not for a month?" said Rivière, incredulously.

"No; and if you've got anything to sell, we don't want any, do we, sir?" continued the man, turning with a leering grin to the butler, who now came closer.

"No, we don't want any," said the butler, puffing out his cheeks, and looking as dignified as his inane countenance would allow.

Rivière glanced sharply from one to the other, biting his lip to keep back his rage; and then he pressed forward to obtain entrance.

"It is a lie," he said, slowly. "You are paid to cheat me. He will be home soon, and I will wait till he comes."

"Now, what's the good of your being obstinit, Mr. Rivvyer?" said the butler, persuasively. "Don't we tell you Sir Richard aint at home?"

As he spoke, he added the weight of his

person to that of the footman and under-butler, completely blocking up the door.

"You tell me lies!" hissed Rivière, with all a Frenchman's excited gesticulation. "I don't believe you. I say he is at home. You insult me, too, with your 'don't want any.' I can see, my friend, into the milestone. You do not deceive me. I know you are told to say not at home. But I see through it all, and if he is away I will wait hours—days, till he does come. I *will* see him."

"But don't I tell you you can't see him?" said the butler, angrily.

"Stand away, canaille!" hissed Rivière, making a dash forward.

Then, there was a scuffle which lasted a few moments, a certain amount of hair powder was shed, and the stronger got the better of the weaker; but, all the same, Rivière in his fierce anger nearly gained an entrance.

"Shut the door, James, can't you?" puffed Mr. Sellars. "D'yer want him to get in? Bang it, if he don't get out of the way. I don't care if his hands is in—a-coming and tearing off a man's buttons in this way! Why don't you shut the door?"

"Well, how can I when he's got his foot stuck in it like this here?" grumbled James. "Let go, will you! Here, give a shove some on you."

Bang!

There had been a sharp tussle just at the last, a swaying to and fro, and then Rivière was suddenly sent back far enough on the steps for the door to be closed, with a report like thunder to go echoing through the house, while he was left raging and fuming outside.

He stood for a few moments irresolute, and then walked along all four sides of the square to cool himself, and overcome the rage and mortification which nearly drove him mad. He felt that everybody was watching, that every man he met knew his history, and had seen his troubles from beginning to end.

Once round the square, and he was angry as ever. He would see Sir Richard, and force him to meet him—to give him satisfaction. He would have forgiven him before: he had forgiven him. Had he not gone to him, as it were, hat in hand, as if saying—"Let the bygone be a bygone—let it be forgotten, only befriend me now." And what had been the result? He had insulted him

more than ever, and driven his wife half mad with suspicion that the false charges made in the letter were true.

He would have revenge!

He made this last declaration aloud, and with a great number of r's, greatly to the alarm of a nervous old lady—an antiquated cook—who was standing with her hand upon the area bell of a house on the opposite side of the square.

But Rivière had passed on the next moment, and was hurrying towards Sir Richard Lawler's, determined to get an entrance by some means.

He walked past, though, two or three times, so as to collect himself; for he was conscious of a feeling of dizziness and confusion of intellect, when he knew that he required all his nerve and determination to overcome the opposition which he must encounter.

At last he walked sharply up the steps, and thundered at the door, standing back the next moment for a rush.

If he had stood close up, he might have gained his point; but as it was, he was in full view, and one of the servants made a careful observation from one of the side panes, afterwards declining to open the door.

Rivière bit his lips with anger; for he caught a glimpse of the powdered head.

He repeated the knock, and waited.

No answer.

He knocked again.

No answer.

Seizing the knocker, he thundered at it again till there was the sound of a rattling chain being put up, the catch was drawn back, and the door opened.

He immediately threw himself against it; but to his chagrin it only gave way for a few inches, and jarred against the chain, while his face was close up to that of Mr. Sellars, who was speaking to him through the slit.

"Now, just look here, Mr. Rivvyer, this sort of thing may do in France, but it won't do here; so take my advice and go. My orders from Sir Richard was that if you come to the house and made any bother, I was to send for the police. Now, air you going away quietly, or am I to send for the police?"

"I will see your master," cried Rivière, wrathfully.

"But you can't; and I tell you what it is, sir, if you don't go, I ra'ally will send for the

police; for I aint going to have my door knocked about like that, so I tell you."

"Tell your master that he is a cur—a coward—a scoundrel—a poltroon!" exclaimed Rivière, livid now with fury, and shaking his fist impotently at the door; till, seeing that a crowd was fast collecting, he strode away, trying to calm the passion that surged in his breast.

For some distance he was followed by a straggling tail of boys, who watched him narrowly for the length of quite a couple of streets, and then began to drop off on finding that he had ceased to gesticulate.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A FRACAS.

IT was growing dark, and the lamps were beginning to twinkle along the far-reaching streets, till they shone in the distant perspective like rows of golden beads, ever approaching nearer and nearer. Carriages were passing here and there in the better-class streets, each bearing its freight of lightly clad inmates—the proportion being one lady taking up three-quarters of a vehicle, the gentleman the other fourth. Every here and there, too, in street and square, the front doors of mansions were open, and the staff of servants calmly surveying fashionable life from the steps, indicating to all passers-by that "our people" were out to dinner.

As Rivière passed group after group of these well-fed idlers, he glanced at them half enviously as he saw the complete absence of care on their smooth, sleek visages. But his rage was still too hot within him to take much heed, and he passed on till he once more reached Sir Richard's house in the square.

There was a chariot at the door now, with a pair of horses pawing impatiently at the road. What did it mean?

He paused to think for a few moments, then the answer came: they were going out to dinner.

It was most unfortunate, he told himself: he could not strike the husband in the presence of the wife. He would wait, though, he thought—it might be Sir Richard going alone; and if so, he was certain of such an interview as would enforce a meeting.

"Let me strike him on the cheek before his servants, and he cannot refuse to meet me."

Half an hour did he wait, with the obstinate pertinacity of a dog; and then, at

last, a footman stepped out bearing a roll of horsehair carpet, which was rolled down from the steps, across the pavement to the carriage door. A minute later, Lady Lawler, looking extremely handsome in her full evening dress, made her appearance, and walked quickly down to the carriage; then the steps were rattled up, the door closed; the footman gave his orders to the coachman, and sprang up behind; when, as the carriage was moving off and Lady Lawler in the act of drawing up the window, she caught sight of Rivière's pale, angry face.

He did not hear it, but she uttered a faint cry, and stretched out one hand to him, as with the other she sought the check-string.

Rivière was, for the moment, about to spring forward; but there seemed to interpose itself between them the pale, despairing face of his wife; and then he recalled the treatment he had received from Sir Richard and his servants. The indecision was gone in an instant, and he shrank hastily back.

His movement was not unseen: Lady Lawler saw the action and the carriage rolled on unchecked, with her ladyship bound for a dinner party—Sir Richard dining that evening at his club.

It might have been better for all had the carriage been stopped, and Lady Lawler said a few friendly words to the excitable little Frenchman; for she would probably have checked the torrent of rage waiting to be poured in fury upon her husband. But it was not to be; and half an hour after, Lady Lawler had all but forgotten the incident.

Rivière had hardly eaten or drunk that day; but still he stayed on, pacing about, never losing sight of the house, only refreshing himself from time to time with a pinch of tobacco rolled deftly up between his lithe fingers into a cigarette. Hour after hour passed, but no Sir Richard. There had been plenty of false alarms, carriages and cabs driving up; but no Sir Richard.

He had seen the chariot return and enter a mews close by; and a couple of hours later he saw it reissue, and drive off—to return an hour farther on, with Lady Lawler inside.

For a few seconds he felt disposed to run up and hand her out, for she was still alone; but something seemed to check him. He felt that he was not fit company for a refined woman; for he was half mad. But as he

stood in the shelter of a neighbouring doorway, he saw the light flash from her jewels as she half paused on the carriage step and glanced in each direction, as though to see if he were there.

He shrank back into the shadow, and in another few seconds she had passed from sight, the long roll of carpet was drawn in, and where a moment before there had been a long, well-defined flood of light, lay blackness, showing that the hall door had been suddenly closed. Almost at the same instant the carriage rattled by, and the great square was sombre and deserted once more.

It was a weary task; but Riviere did not seem to feel it. Sir Richard was out somewhere; and he paced up and down, up and down, with untiring patience—his lips pale as his cheek, but his eyes seeming to blaze, as he turned again and again, now on the pavement, now in the road, from whence he could look up and watch the windows.

He knew the internal economy of the house pretty well, and he noted as he looked up that there was a light in the nursery, another in the drawing-room—that was all; and he argued that Lady Lawler was awaiting the coming of her husband, otherwise she would have retired to rest, and he should have also seen a light in Sir Richard's dressing-room.

He was not away: he was sure of that. The servants had been told to lie to him, and deny that their master was at home; and he—he, Louis Rivière, would stay till he dropped; but he would smite him on the cheek, and tell him he was a liar and a coward.

Twelve had struck, and the carriages which rumbled through the streets were fewer and farther between. A policeman had turned upon him his bull's-eye, and passed out of sight; and still no Sir Richard. It must have been close upon one when, as if electrified, Rivière started from where he had been leaning against the iron railings of the square garden, and threw away his cigarette; for there came now the sharp rattle of a Hansom cab.

He was on the kerb before it could reach the door; for instinct seemed to have told him his enemy was at hand. The blood danced in his veins, as the cab drew up sharply. Then a tall figure sprang lightly out, handed half-a-crown to the driver, and was in the act of turning, when a hand was

placed upon his throat, and he stood face to face with Rivière.

"You have insulted me!" the latter ground out between his teeth.

"Stand back, you scoundrel!" exclaimed Sir Richard, whose flushed face betokened that he had been drinking heavily, and he tried to force his way past his assailant. But, active as a cat, Rivière fixed his other hand in the baronet's necktie; and though he was swung back by the stronger man, managed to hold on tenaciously.

"Look here!" exclaimed Rivière, panting, "dog of an Englishman that you are! You have insulted me. Will you give me the satisfaction of a gentleman?"

Sir Richard's reply was a heavy blow across his assailant's face with his umbrella.

"Another blow!" hissed Rivière, savagely. "You force me to fight like you canaille of English—like a groom or brute beast!"

And loosening one hand, he struck Sir Richard two or three smart blows in the face in return.

Here the struggle was interrupted by the cabman, who sprang off his perch just as the hall door was flung open, to bathe the whole scene with light; and the sleepy footman, after staring aghast for a moment or two, hurried out to his master's assistance.

Even now a crowd was collecting—one of those heterogeneous assemblies which, no matter what the hour of the day or night, seem suddenly to spring up from nowhere, no one knows how; and opinions were passing pretty freely upon what they called the row.

Last of all, and very leisurely, just as the voices were loudest and most excitable, came a policeman, not in the slightest degree out of breath, and in time to hear Rivière shriek rather than say—

"Will you give me the satisfaction now, or must I tear you like a dog? Will you meet me?"

"No, you scoundrel—no!" cried Sir Richard, hoarsely, who, thoroughly roused, was now able to hold his weaker antagonist easily at bay.

"Fair play!" cried the crowd.

"Yes, let 'em have fair play!" said a ragged-looking rough, shouldering off the footman, while a couple more held back the cabman from interfering.

"Here, policeman!" exclaimed Sir Richard, who was the first to see the new-comer;

"I give this fellow into custody. He has assaulted me—look here!"

The turned-on bull's-eye had already shown the constable the bleeding face of the baronet, and he had also taken in the scene at a glance—making out that one of the contending parties was dressed as a gentleman, and that the other was shabby in the extreme.

"Here, you make yourself scarce," said the policeman to the big rough; "and you button up your coat, sir, unless you want to lose that there chain," he continued, turning to Sir Richard, whose light paletot had been torn open from top to bottom. "Now, then—assault, is it? Any witnesses?"

"Yes, plenty," exclaimed Sir Richard, still panting with his exertions; for Rivière was writhing fiercely in his grasp. "Here's the cabman who brought me from the club. My servant, too, he saw part of it. Hold this man, will you? There, that is my card. This is my house. I am Sir Richard Lawler."

"Sir Richard's got it 'ot, aint he?" sniggered one of the crowd, and there was a laugh.

"Mounseer aint got nothing to brag about," said another.

Then there was silence as all pressed forward to listen to the conversation.

"All right, sir," said the policeman; "you'll have to appear. P'raps you'll come on in your cab, and enter the charge?"

"Stop!" exclaimed Rivière, twisting his arm loose from the policeman's clutch; "he has assaulted me—he has insulted me—he dares not give me in charge!"

And he strove once more to get near Sir Richard.

"Come, none o' that, you know!" exclaimed the policeman, getting a tighter hold, and giving his captive an official shake. "You'd better come on quietly."

"Yah! Let the poor man go!" cried two or three in the crowd, now ready to help what they considered the poor and oppressed against the rich.

"I will not go—I protest," exclaimed Rivière. "Sir Richard, this is a greater act of cowardice than ever."

And he shivered at the officer's touch; for it brought up France—his trial and imprisonment.

"None o' that, I tell you!" exclaimed the policeman, trying to make a move; but the crowd held firm, and there was an ominous

buzz—the words, "Let the poor man go," being heard again, while Sir Richard was more than once roughly hustled, and his hat knocked off; for seeing that he wore a valuable watch and chain, several members of the crowd had grown wonderfully chivalrous on behalf of the suffering foreigner. Perhaps something more stirring would have taken place—resulting, possibly, in a rescue—had not another policeman come slowly up to fortify his brother of the staff, the couple proceeding to lead off their prisoner.

There was also another diversion to take the attention of the crowd; for a lady suddenly appeared in full dress at the hall door, and ran down to where Sir Richard stood wiping his face, and about to leap into his cab; for the driver had once more resumed his place, and had whispered to him to jump in, if he didn't want to have his pockets picked.

"Oh, Richard, what is this?"

"What!—you here?" he replied, angrily. "Your work, if you must know," he added, in a low voice. "Go in at once, and let's have no more scandal."

"Is that Monsieur Rivière?" she exclaimed, pointing towards the retreating figure with the police. "I saw him to-night. Oh, Richard," she whispered, "you have never been so base—"

"So base as to give the ruffian into custody for assaulting me? Yes, ma'am, I have. Wait, cabby," he said, aloud. And then, catching Lady Lawler by the arm, he hurried her through the thinning crowd to the door, and stayed till it was closed.

The next minute Sir Richard's cab was rattling along towards the police station; Lady Lawler was crying hysterically in the drawing-room; and the footman was busy relating the incidents of the fracas to the sleepy under-butler in the servants' hall.

"And where's Sir Richard, then?" said the under-butler.

"Gone to the police station to see the little Frenchman locked up."

"And serve him right!"

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

IN THE SEWERS.

"DON'T feel afraid, do you, sir?"

"Oh, no, not in the least," I assure him—"him" being a big, heavy-looking man in jack-boots, oozing with grease, and

reaching nearly to his hips. He carries a lantern and a key. At the same time I may as well mention that I also carry a lantern, but no key. I am also stuck, as far as my lower extremities go, in a pair of great greasy jack-boots, which reach nearly to my hips; and I am swathed in a great dark blue jersey shirt, and covered with a big pea-jacket. It strikes me forcibly that the wife of my bosom would not quite approve of my personal appearance; half an hour after, I feel certain that she would not be delighted by the scent I emit; while at the present time, were she here, it is quite certain that she would not sanction my proceedings.

Oh no, no, not afraid—not in the least; but all the same, I am not comfortable. It is very early morn, and the street lamps are trying to give light, and being quenched by the advance guard sent to earth by the sun. It is a slimy, damp time, and I feel like Aladdin with the wicked magician, as my companion, who speaks always inside himself, and whose words only reach me as a rumble, stoops down, inserts his key in a diamond-patterned iron doorway in the pavement, and pulls it up. I say I feel like Aladdin, only we have our lamps in our hands, so to speak, at the wrong end of the story.

The iron trap-door being opened, a thin, dark-looking steam arises through a grating, which my companion also raises, giving a grunt as he does so, for really it is a great effort to stoop in such boots; and then fair—no, foul—to view lies before my delighted eyes the way down into the sewers. It is a square well-hole, and in the dim morning light looks very deep. There are no stairs; but a series of great iron staples stuck in the brickwork form foot and hand hold for those who go down.

Now, I'll casually own to you, sir, as my editor, though you need not make it public, that the time having arrived when, by bribing and appointment, I have prevailed upon my muttering friend to take me down, I don't want to go. The place looks very gruesome, and all sorts of ideas crop up in my busy brain. Suppose—

He's watching me, with a very grim and amused expression on his countenance, and it is evident that he thinks I am going to turn tail; but I won't.

I was sure of it; for the next moment he says, with a slow grin—

"Looks grubby, don't it, sir?"

"Well, yes; it don't look inviting," I say cheerfully, as if I were going to have an interview with the garotters' cat in Newgate. "But what are we waiting for?"

"Oh, only for Dick and Sampson," is the gruff reply. "Don't do to go down the sewers alone—we never does that, sir."

Dick and Sampson come round the corner as he speaks—a couple of gentlemen who look like our big brothers, as far as dress is concerned; for each man is stuck in a pair of great boots and wears a jersey.

They shuffle up to us, and say nothing, only give my companion of the internal voice a short nod; and then Dick—I feel sure he is Dick, because he is the bigger man of the two, Sampson by the pleasant rule of contraries being surely the lesser—seats himself on the pavement, thrusts his leg down the hole, and begins slowly to descend. Sampson takes the lantern from my companion, and as soon as Dick's head is below the surface, disappearing with what looks to me like a horrible, ghastly grin, Sampson begins to let himself down.

"You'll go next," says Gruff—I'll call him by this name for distinction, if you please; and he gives me a shove which nearly sends me down promiscuously. He only means it for a nudge, though; and he continues—

"I'll follow last. Holt tight to the steps. 'Taint far down—on'y a matter o' fifty foot here."

Only a matter of fifty feet! This grows painful. Unpleasant thoughts begin once more to crowd on me. Suppose these three big-booted bravoes should murder me in the sewers! Nobody saw us descend. It is very horrible, and begins to seem like a dream. I recollect, though, that I did pay my sewers rate, and that there cannot possibly be any animus against me on that score; unless the collector has roused an ill feeling against me by announcing that he was compelled to call three times before he got his money.

But, pooh! I will not harbour such thoughts. All the same, though, it does look very much like being a prisoner of the dark ages, and being taken down to the deepest dungeon below the castle moat. "Only a matter o' fifty foot!" It might be a hundred and fifty, as, screwing my courage up to the sticking point, I begin slowly to climb down, wishing devoutly all the time

that my Darwinian ancestors of the monkey race had transmitted to me a little more of their quadrumanal activity.

It is not pleasant work; and after lowering myself a few steps I want to shut my eyes, but give up the idea the next moment, for my booted feet take my attention by making frantic efforts to slip off each step, as if to leave me hanging in mid-air.

"Mind how you go, sir!" a gruff voice cries from above, and it suddenly grows pitchy dark, while a rustling, scraping noise informs me that Gruff is descending after me. I begin to compare myself to that man spoken of by Shakspeare who pursued the dreadful trade, and hung half-way down, gathering something; but in my confusion I cannot satisfactorily settle in my own mind whether it was camphor or damp slime. I wish, though, it was camphor, if only to counteract this horrible odour of drains which assails my dilating nostrils.

"Smell's very bad," I venture to suggest; and then feel startled, so husky and hollow sound the tones of my voice.

"Oh, it's all right, sir," growls the voice above. "All the gratings has been open."

Plash!

Is anything wrong? That was a horrible splashing noise; but no one takes any notice.

Plash!

There it is again! Have the poor fellows fallen into some horrible water-pit—that, for instance, from which the strange, washing, trickling noise comes up? My companion above, though, takes no heed; and only growls out to me—

"Take care, sir, we're close to the bottom now."

The next moment a lantern is flashed in my eyes, and I take the last step too suddenly, and find that I am sinking—sinking—good gracious! Oh, there's bottom.

"Step this here way, sir, a bit, or he'll be putting his foot on your head."

I step that way, for I don't want to be crowned as suggested; and find myself staggering in a black, murky stream which nearly rises to the top of my boots; and then, before I have recovered myself, I find that we are four men and two lanterns, forming a sort of kit-cat picture, of a very Rembrandtish style in its lights and shades, while its framework is a glistening arch of brickwork overhead.

"Here we are, sir," says my companion,

with voice gruffer than ever; for he shouts, and it sounds hollow and echoing. Then, at his suggestion, we move forward—plash, plash!—through the black-looking water, which shines horribly, and reflects the rays of our lanterns. For the first minute it seems that I must be in the coal-cellar, and that a drain has burst and flooded it, while these are the workmen come about the repairs. Directly after, though, it strikes me that the cellar is terribly long, for it stretches on before us, apparently to infinity, and always the same—a great, long-drawn, cellar-like place, made of the finest brickwork, so that no sediment should lodge. But before going far, I became aware of similar sewers coming into ours at various distances, and before long of another the same size crossing it almost at right angles.

By this time familiarity has made me almost ready to treat the place with contempt; but not quite, for it is not pleasant to be walking—wading—through filthy water fifty feet below the street. But whatever confidence I possess is pretty well swept away by the remark of one of my guides, who so far have been doing nothing but thrust a spade in here or there to stir up a little mud that has collected in the eddy formed by some tributary stream.

"Ah," he says, "you should see the water come down there sometimes. Sweep you away in a moment!"

"And then?" I say.

"Well, I s'pose they'd fish you out of the gratings at Barking."

"Dead?"

"Rather, after five or six miles' ride under water—and such water as this."

My friend's mouth is open now—I prefer to keep mine shut; and he continues to serve up horrors for my delectation during the rest of my stay in the sewery realm. I say serve up horrors; but subsequent investigation showed me that his words were true.

I ask if there are rats, and I am told that they swim about in droves; and that whenever the water is low, so as to leave the sloping, semicircular bottom bare, with its thin coating of mud, their tracks are to be seen everywhere. I see none; the approach of our lights scaring them away into the smaller sewers and drains, where they seek the greater part of their living, which is chiefly grease brought down the house-drains, principally from the kitchen sinks.

But in spite of stern edicts against such practices, a great deal of refuse is sent down into the sewers, notably from the lower-class slaughter-houses; and we encounter one horrible floating tangle slowly making its way along the foul stream, which one of the men announces to be entrails.

"We finds babies sometimes," says my informant, gruffly.

I stare incredulously; for this is London, not Pekin.

"Fact," he says, nodding his head significantly; and he adds sundry horrors over which it is as well to cast a veil.

"Nothing is lost, you see," he continues; "for down at the outfalls at Barking there are great strainers always lowered, and these catch everything solid that floats down—bones, paper, rags, rats that have been swept away in flood times and drowned, and everything is carried down; for you don't feel any mud under foot, the brickwork is so fine that everything is washed away clean."

I have already noticed that there seems nothing but dirty, ill-smelling water, and no mud save at the embouchure of some tributary; but I am surprised to hear that so greatly does the water preponderate that there are only so many—fifty or sixty—grains of solid matter per gallon.

I ask about floods.

"Floods! Ah, you wouldn't be here if there was a flood; for the water rises like a shot, and carries all before it. That's after storms. Come a good heavy shower, we should be drowned in no time if we stopped here."

And I had not studied the weather before I came down! Who could help feeling nervous after this? Not I.

"We take care of that, though," he continues; "and so we do to keep the gratings open for ventilation before we come down; for there's all sorts of bad gases collects down here, same as in mines. Some's only bad air as the lights won't burn in, and smothers you right away, so that you falls down at once. Others the lights will burn in, and burn themselves too. We've had more than one explosion here, and men horribly burned. But you aint no call to be skeered. Them gases is mostly from the chemical works, and plenty of open gratings clears them away."

We are now standing at what seem to be cross-roads. Great, silent, black canals of water; and we seem as we go along, plash,

plash, plash, with the water now deepening, to be wading in a subterranean Venice.

"We won't go down that one," says our leader, pointing to the left; "the water's deeper there."

I learn why directly; the reason being that while the sewer through which we have been wading has been a circular brick tube, the one pointed out is egg-shaped—that is, the shape of a longitudinal section of an egg, with the narrow part placed downwards.

On we go, with the water behind seeming to press forward through these dreary, elongated cellars, of which there are about two thousand miles, extending in veins through and through great London—north, south, east, and west—and all running into the great arteries of the northern and southern high and low level sewers, which run east to discharge on either bank of the Thames, near Barking. And now I am made acquainted, as we wade down a great circular water centre, with the roof some three feet above our heads, on whose damp bricks our lights flash and glimmer, with the arrangement for carrying off the storm water. We are, it seems, going along parallel with the Thames in the great sewer which intersects many of the old outfalls which used to run down in the river. These, however, are bricked up to a certain height, and the sewage flows by them, save in times of flood, when it rises in the great main drain high enough to flow over into the Thames drains, down which it passes, almost clear water, to the river, and so relieves the choking system, and prevents floods rising into the basements of houses.

I am told that the water is low now, but that it soon rises to six or seven feet in depth; and there are parts of the sewers where men never go down without taking extra precautions, such as choosing a dry time, having plenty of ventilation, and arranging that the pumps shall have been going well at the outfalls, so as to lower the water as much as possible.

For it is a weird journey, to go for miles and miles through these subterranean ways, in places fifty or sixty feet below the surface of the earth; and when these journeys are made the men are specially dressed in india-rubber suits, provided with hoods to cover head and face, that they may be prepared to duck under water in case of an explosion, which flashes over the surface of the inky stream like lightning.

Unpleasant truths these to hear, with the water slowly gurgling by in an insidious, snaky fashion, that makes one shudder and gaze at the various openings which lead to gratings, and fresh air, and liberty. I own to being troubled with unpleasant feelings, and yet I could not regret my visit to this realm of wonders; for in spite of its sameness, wonderful it is. And how few have any idea of the vast system beneath their feet ever silently bearing the foul waters of the City away and away. Two thousand miles! The figures seem incredible, but they are hard facts; and all these miles of drains are carefully made of the best brickwork, to ensure lasting qualities.

One wonder down here is how moderate is the offensive smell. It is bad, certainly—making nostrils to contract, and mind to think of sulphuretted hydrogen; but on the whole, the vast amount of water quenches, so to speak, much of the vileness; and it is, at any rate, bearable.

Plop, plop, plop!

"Them's rats, sir; there they go," says one of the men; but the scared rodents are out of sight in the distance, and I see nothing but a glimmering ripple on the water, where our lanterns play, showing that it has been disturbed, that is all. What would it be, though, should I be left here alone and in the dark?

Bah! who's afraid of a rat?

Not I; but there are millions!

"I've had nearly enough of this," I venture to hint. "Is there much more to see?"

"No, sir; it's all the same, mile after mile; only that some of the drains is big, and some's little. See there, that's a pretty good flush of water down that one."

I look and see a hole of about three feet in diameter, softly vomiting forth a great body of water, which swells and eddies as it joins the stream where we stand.

"I shouldn't wonder if it's come on to rain," says one of the others.

"Ah, then we'll get back," says our leader.

And we turn on the instant, to begin wading back, with the water getting deeper each moment. I know it soon enough; for suddenly I feel a cold chill, and become aware of the fact that it is entering at the tops of my boots, which grow heavier each moment, and cling to my tired legs. A disposition to run and struggle comes upon me—the first faint symptoms of the feeling

which begets a panic; but the few steadily-spoken words of my guide quell it directly.

"Nough to scare a man," he says, "to know that the water's rising fast about you, and that if you stayed long enough you must be swep' away and drowned. But, bless you, there's no danger."

Could he have read my thoughts? I showed no white feather.

"No danger," he continues; "there's a creep-hole every here and there, and if the water rose very high we should get out at once."

The water does not rise much higher; so we wade on, till, hot and weary, we reach the hole by which we came down. I do not know it, and should have missed my way in some of the turnings a score of times; but my companions are quite at home, and stop as if by instinct.

Our leader goes first, and I follow, slipping again and again as my boots touch the wet irons; and more than once I get sprinkled with the dabs from my companion's boots. The next minute I hear the grating thrown up with a clang; and after toiling up a little higher, a hand is stretched out to me, and as I emerge, stiff and weary, a small voice greets my advent with—

"Oh, lookye here, Bill, they've been down in the shore!"

Ah! what a sweet, pure breath of air! What a glorious noise, after wading in those silent regions, with nought but the soft wash of the murky stream to greet the ears! Up on earth again, not in it. Out of the darkness, and foul odour, and creepiness of rat-land, to life and busy streetdom. Call the regions of the sewers below what you like: to him who has emerged from their depths, the ordinary world seems like Heaven.

A NEW GAME.

"**W**ORK, sir, work! There's nothing like work!" said an old gentleman. And the reader will easily picture the style of old gentleman who would talk like that—stiff and grizzly of hair, rather stout, a blue-bottle style of man, with a great deal of buzz and bang-about in his composition, and rather given to be an annoyance to his fellow-creatures.

He was quite right. There is nothing like work. And a good thing too; for there is enough work in the world, and to spare. With some of us, from early childhood to

weak old age, it is work, work, work, from weary chime to chime; and we long, as did Hood's sempstress, for the blue sky and sunny fields. No one disputes the value of work, nor its advantages; but do we not work far harder than did our ancestors? and is it to our advantage? The man who lives solely for pleasure is, of course, a weak noodle, who soon finds his sugared existence a curse; but, really, the amount of wholesome amusement that enters into present middle-class life is very small. There are on every side recreations spread out for our attraction, but as a rule they are of anything but an elevating tendency. They are, for the most part, cloying and unwholesome; therefore, the man who invents a good, sound, honest game—one that amuses, and at the same time calls forth a certain amount of intellectual action—is one who well deserves a niche in the Temple of Fame.

One's ideas upon such matters are rather strange; but one would rather have been the man who invented chess than he who slew his thousands and conquered nations. Certainly, one would sleep more soundly, and feel happier at the end, if one had been Gilbert Grace, the cricketer, rather than Napoleon the Great of history. It is childish, perhaps, to be fond of games; but somehow the man who has this love generally looks beaming of eye and contented of face, his digestion seems good, and you seldom hear him growl, save when hungry. Yes, commend us to the lover of games; and, above all, to him who can introduce one that is new.

Here is a new one—Zetema, in which the inventor seems to have hit the happy medium. It is not deeply scientific, like whist, nor does it possess that game's solid, silent exclusiveness. Whist and mirth do not go together; and the latter should be excluded from the game when the former is played. Neither does our new game possess the unsatisfactory elements of loo or vingt-un—games wherein half your time is spent, though you may be of the set, in seeing other people play. Our new game, as we say, seems to be upon the medial line; for it is pleasant and cheery, has its scientific qualities in moderation, sufficient to act as a spice of flavouring to the whole. Two can play and enjoy it; so can three, or four, or five, even seven or eight, making it a genial round game, in which there is no standing out or waiting. Chatty conversation is not out of place, and there are plenty of points of in-

terest which will call forth an innocent laugh at the expense of others.

One great feature in the game is that it requires no expensive apparatus. No one can deny that a billiard table is a grand resource in a country house; but then there is the cost. Our Zetema simply requires an outlay of three shillings and sixpence, or more, according to the taste of the purchaser.

We will describe the game; it will not be out of place now that the nights are lengthening, and the cheery party is too often weather-bound and dependent upon the resources of home.

The game, then, is played with ordinary playing cards—a complete pack and one suit of another pack, generally hearts. This is called the duplicate suit, and raises the number of cards in the playing pack to sixty-five. The other necessary for the game is a set of cardboard markers, each marked with a dial, and a couple of index hands turning on pins, and marking—the one from 0 to 100 by fives, and the other registering 100 and 200; thus enabling the player to mark together 300 points, which is the game if two or three are playing. With any other number up to six, the game is 200; and for seven or eight, 150.

To begin, the cards are shuffled and cut, as usual; and, according to the number of the players, four, five, or six cards are dealt round, and the pack placed in the centre of the table, within the reach of all the players. According to old custom, the player on the dealer's left is to lead; but first of all he has to look through his hand to see what it contains—for he has to try and score up to 300, say, before his competitors. So he glances over his cards to see if he holds a marriage, which it may be easily seen is the king and queen of a suit.

He does not hold a marriage; if he had he could have played it as a trick, laid it down, taken two more cards from the top of the pack, and scored himself ten. But he does not hold it, so he looks further. Does he hold a sequence?—that is to say, a run of cards, irrespective of suit, following one after the other—seven, eight, nine, ten, knave, queen, or so on. If he does hold this sequence, it is a grand lift; for then he has to show his hand and "declare" his sequence, scoring for it thirty. His next proceeding is to lay one of his cards face uppermost in the centre of the table, and to

take another to replace it in his hand from the pack.

But our imaginary friend is not so lucky: he does not hold a sequence, so he must look for the next thing—a flush. Does he hold a flush? That is, are all his cards of a suit—diamonds, clubs, or spades?—the duplicate suit of hearts is out of court, and has no *locus standi*, as the lawyers call it. If he has this flush, he has to declare it by exhibiting his hand, and for this also he scores thirty—proceeding, as in the other case, to lay down one card upon the table and take up one from the pack, so as to keep his hand complete. And here we may mention that it is possible to hold and declare a marriage, a sequence, and a flush together. As, for instance, if the player held of diamonds or clubs eight, nine, ten, knave, queen, king—when he would score ten for the marriage, king and queen; thirty for the sequence, eight to king, and thirty for the flush, all his cards being of one suit.

This is a great rarity, though; for the cards do not often favour the player to this extent, and in this our example hand he has not even a flush, so we must see if he has an assembly—that is to say, five cards in his hand of equal value—five aces, five twos, five threes, five of any value. If so, he must declare it, and these five cards form a trick, which he must lay down, remaking up his hand by taking the five top cards from the pack. And for this assembly he has to score a variety of numbers according to the value of the cards. If he is lucky enough to hold five kings or queens, he scores one hundred; for the knaves, ninety; aces and fives, eighty; and for any other assembly, sixty. As before intimated, he must score, lay down his five cards—kings, or whatever they may be—and take five cards from the pack to make up his diminished hand.

Taking our typical player as a most unlucky man, we find on going through his hand that he has neither marriage, sequence, flush, nor assembly; so he must play—that is to say, lay down, his least valuable card (face upwards) on the table, and take another from the top of the pack, giving place to his neighbour, who takes his turn; and so on all round the table.

We say his “least valuable card;” let us explain.

On looking through his hand he may find that he has almost a sequence, or be

only one short of a flush: it is easy then to see which are the least valuable cards. He, of course, discards the one that does not run with the sequence or class with the flush, and hopes to take from the pack a card that may suit and enable him to score. Again, he may nearly have an assembly, and of course will act in a similar manner until he sees that somebody else has played the card he requires, when of course he gives the chase up as lost.

Or he may hold one or two kings and queens, which he will try to retain, from the chance he has of taking up their betrothed ones, and thus ensuring a marriage and a satisfactory score. It is decidedly advisable, too, to try and make a sequence of high cards—those that will contain queen and king; for in this the player has a double chance, that of gaining a sequence and a marriage.

Now let us turn to the cards laid out upon the table, which form the tricks; and these are either five like cards or the marriageable cards—*i.e.*, the kings and queens. For instance, with these latter, one of the neighbours has laid down a king, and it comes round to our player's turn; he happens to hold the queen of the same suit, and takes up the king, scoring to himself a marriage. Or our friend may be compelled by the exigencies of the game to lay down his queen, which is taken by a neighbour who holds the king, and so scores to himself the ten for the marriage. The other tricks consist of five like cards—that is, assemblies, though now they do not score for assemblies, but simply as tricks. In laying down cards, A. plays a seven perhaps, and by degrees three more sevens are played and laid face upwards upon the others, when the next player, who holds the fifth seven, takes the trick, which scores to him five.

But there are a few plums in these tricks, and it is in fighting and scheming for these plums—holding back for them—that a great deal of the skill and scheming of the game consists. Much, of course, depends on the management of the hand; as a practised player will, in trying for a sequence, contrive to leave two ways open to complete it with the card he takes up. He will manage to hold say four, five, six, seven, eight, when the card he turns up will be equally serviceable, be it a three or a nine, either completing his sequence; whereas, if he held ace, two,

three, four, five, he has only one chance—that is, the six alone will enable him to score.

The plums to be fought for amongst the tricks are the five aces and the five fives, both of which score fifteen instead of five; and the five knaves, which score twenty.

Again, there are little advantages to be obtained by a skilful player, if chance will aid him.

We know that a marriage scores ten; but if our friend will scheme, by judicious discarding, and wait till he can declare two marriages at once, he will score thirty. If of the duplicated suit, fifty; and by contriving it is possible, though rarely, to secure all five marriages at once, and so score 150.

Sometimes a player may give his neighbour a great lift by throwing away his own chance—forgetting to draw a card in his turn; and then he is not allowed to make it up afterwards: no great loss, it might be thought, only that the forgetful one forfeits all claim to sequences and flushes.

And so the game goes on, trick after trick being taken, till the last, which are most frequently the valuable ones—the aces, fives, and knaves—for the simple reason that each player holds back for the capture of one or other of them, since their effect is so good upon the score.

But we are not professing to give the whole rules of the game; those who would play must refer to the neatly printed little book which accompanies each box, and correctly explains the various changes of this ingenious game, which possesses the following advantage—simplicity, in spite of the lengthy way in which it has been here described, for it is one of those amusements which a seeker after recreation can learn to play at a single sitting. Of course he will not play in a masterly fashion, nor have settled into the finesse of the game; but they will follow without much effort of mind, no slight advantage to many who reach home jaded and worn with the daily attrition of life.

But there is another and a very great advantage in Zetema: it is a game which the children can either join in or play by themselves, for even the most inveterate haters of cards could find no word to say against a game so thoroughly wholesome and satisfactory.

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER III.

"She came—she is gone—we have met."—*Couper.*

ACCORDING to her usual custom, Agnes stopped the carriage as it drew near the bridge over the Heath, and said she would walk home through the plantation.

To her astonishment, old John, giving the reins to the footman, came to the door himself; and, before opening it, put in his head at the window, and said, in a mysterious voice—

"If you please, miss, may I make so bold as to say how I've heered tell there's a notice of trespass up in t' planting?"

"A notice of trespass, John? What a shame! Who could have put it up? I consider it an infringement on the rights of the poor people of Heathfield; but I will see if it is true, and if any one is taken up, I will be the first."

Saying which she jumped out of the carriage, and at once entered the forbidden ground, with her mind so full of imaginary injustice that she walked under the first notice without perceiving it.

She had got about half-way through the plantation, and her indignation was beginning to cool, when a sudden turn in the path brought her face to face with a second edition of the obnoxious notice.

"There you are at last," exclaimed she, stopping and reading out aloud, as if defying the whole world. "'Caution.—All persons trespassing in this plantation will be prosecuted as the law directs.'"

At that moment she felt the shadow of two arms coming down on her, and heard a strong, laughing voice say in her ear—

"In this case, my child, I take the law into my own hands, and the fine is as many kisses as I choose to take."

Agnes looked up, and saw, almost touching her forehead, a face, with a soft smiling mouth, long fair moustache, and—what angered her most—two very amused blue eyes.

Their mutual gaze seemed somewhat to stagger them both; but Agnes, recovering herself first, with eel-like dexterity slipped from his hands, and ran a few paces off. Then, turning round full upon him, and drawing herself up to her greatest height, with flashing eyes and all the scorn she could muster to her aid, she flung at him these five words—

"I am not a child!"

She looked so absurdly like one at that moment, that it was in vain he of the blue eyes endeavoured to smother a laugh. Oh, horror of horrors! she saw this monster in human form laughing at her still. This was more than feminine nature could endure; and, feeling the tears starting to her eyes, she fairly turned and fled. Never had that gallant officer, Captain Philip Nolan, of Her Majesty's Horse Artillery, witnessed such a hasty retreat.

That evening Agnes did not appear in the drawing-room until ten minutes after the gong had sounded. The dinner passed in solemn silence, as is generally the case when two people sit opposite each other, both having something to say they do not care the servants to hear. As soon as those necessary evils had withdrawn, Mrs. Manning looked up and began.

"Mr. Græme was here this afternoon."

"Hope he made himself agreeable, aunt."

"That Mr. Græme cannot fail to do; but I am sure he wanted to speak to you, for he kept waiting and waiting, thinking you would come in, until I told him, poor man, Mrs. Robinson would be in despair how to keep his dinner hot any longer."

"Then I am very glad I was not here, for he must have wanted to scold me."

"Ah, Agnes, you know he is a great deal too fond of you ever to do that."

"Yes, he is very kind, and all that sort of thing; but I cannot help being just a little afraid of him, and I do not like being afraid of any man," said she, drawing her chair close to her aunt's, and looking up into her face.

Then Mrs. Manning knew that she wished no more to be said on the subject; so, by way of changing the conversation, asked—

"How was it you were so late for dinner?"

Now, this was the one question which Agnes hoped to avoid; but as it had been asked, an answer must be given, so she said—

"I went for a long walk in the park, and forgot all about the time."

I am sorry to say this was what the world would call a white lie; for it happened thus.

When Agnes had crossed the foot-bridge, in her sudden flight from Captain Nolan, she paused to consider. Remembering Mr. Græme was expected that afternoon, she felt far too ruffled to encounter him and her aunt

at a tête-à-tête tea, so determined, as she called it, "to walk it out." This consisted in setting off at great speed in no particular direction, under the idea that bodily exertion would distract her thoughts—thoughts which at that moment were anything but pleasant. In the first place, how very mortifying to be always taken for a child; then, how silly to let the opportunity of speaking to Captain Nolan, and showing him the enormity of his crime, slip through her fingers. What a little fool he must think her! This in itself was annoying. No woman, be she fool or not, likes to be thought one.

This rencontre was all the more aggravating to Agnes, as she had sat for hours in Death's Hollow, picturing to herself the unknown owner of the opposite bank, and had long made up her mind that he must be a paragon of perfection; and she felt sad as she saw her fairy visions falling to the ground. But, after all, he of the fair moustache might not be Captain Nolan. She would hope not, though something within her said he was; for, oh! how she did hate that man! His mistaking her for a child might be forgiven; but his standing and laughing at her, never!

It was curious, but no less a fact, that when Mrs. Manning asked her to sing in the evening, she chose "Troika" for her song; and her last words were, as she closed her eyes that night—

"I shall know to-morrow, as the right one is sure to come to church."

The church at Heathfield was sadly behind the times, for as yet it had not been shorn of its pristine simplicity by the ruthless hand of the modern restorer. In a word, it was old-fashioned; so was its parson; so was its singing. This latter was wholly given up to the united geniuses of the village, who, for glory, twice a Sunday made a public exhibition of themselves before the admiring eyes of their relations; and to such a height did their ambitions soar, that they would favour the congregation with a tune of their own composing, in direct defiance to all known laws of harmony and metre. Verily, the music at Heathfield Church was a blending together of strange sounds, inasmuch as the instruments consisted of a flute, fiddle, bass, and horn, all of which did duty on secular holidays at public entertainments in the Bell and Dragon.

Of course the church was portioned out into sheep-pens, which had been allotted

from time immemorial with a total disregard to the proportion of the family—the largest house having the biggest pew, and vice versa. Thus, the carpenter, his wife, eldest son and daughter sat each with a young carpenter on their knee, whom they were obliged to deposit on their vacant seats when they stood up to glorify God; while Mrs. Manning and Agnes were almost lost in their park-like enclosure, in the centre of which stood one of the much envied pillars. For be it known that the great object of the congregation was to get a pew with a pillar in it, which, by sticking small wooden pegs around, they soon converted into a wonderfully efficient hat-stand. And a very curious study the church made, when every pillar was graced with a chaplet of hats.

The corresponding pew to that of Mrs. Manning belonged to the rectory; and it so happened when Agnes Lane knelt down that her horizon was just bounded by the rector's hat-pegs, which for years had been solitarily tenanted by a defunct clerical hat belonging to the clerk, who on no consideration could be induced to hang it up elsewhere; for he had been in the habit, when Mr. Græme first came to Heathfield, of taking his hat and hanging it up, as a protest of right of ownership to the pew. But on the reverend gentleman objecting to this public display of his property every Sunday, he, as next official in rank, substituted in its place his own.

This hat always afforded Agnes Lane an immense amount of amusement; and when under cover of the pew, she generally indulged in a peep, and then in a silent laugh at its dismal appearance.

Raising her head to have her customary look, on the Sunday morning after her never-to-be-forgotten encounter with the biped in the plantation, what was her astonishment to see, in close proximity to the ancient one, a hat which in shape and gloss was a marvel to behold.

"Then," thought she, "he is at church, and in Mr. Græme's pew, too! But you cannot see anything out of these horrid old high pews; and oh! how slow Mr. Græme is reading to-day."

To her restless spirit it seemed an age before she was able to rise and see before her the hero of yesterday's adventure.

It was he—there was no doubting his identity any longer; but oh! how good and subdued he looked to-day, with his eyes

intently fixed on an open prayer book. Slowly he raised his face, and for an instant their eyes met. During the remainder of the service Agnes turned her back resolutely on him; and she felt glad there was no chance of their meeting after church, as Mrs. Manning always walked home through the rectory gardens.

CHAPTER IV.

"There in that hollowed rock, grotesque and wild,
An ample chair moss-lined, and over head
By flowering umbrage shaded."—*Thomson*.

THE eventful Wednesday, the day of the Brownsmiths' dinner party, arrived, and Mrs. Manning, who always looked forward with holy horror to a dinner at Islington Court, declaring at luncheon she could only be equal to the fatigue of the evening by resting all the afternoon, left Agnes Lane to follow the bent of her own sweet will.

Accordingly, taking her block and paint-box, she hurried off to Death's Hollow with the full intention of really finishing, that very afternoon, a sketch of the old ford, which she had begun many times before. Hardly had she sat down, and got fairly to work, when she caught sound of a horse's hoof in the distance. Knowing no horseman on her side of the river could possibly be seen, she looked across to the opposite bank; and there, plain enough, was Captain Nolan on a grey mare. How she did hate him at that moment, as he coolly trotted over the plot of ground she was sketching! What should she do? Her first idea was a strategical movement to the rear; but that had failed already once. No, the best plan was to pretend not to see him.

Meanwhile, Captain Nolan reached the bank. So absorbed had he been in the strange beauty of his own little valley, that it was not until the grey came to a sudden halt that he looked ahead, and then the first object which met his eye was Agnes Lane, seated at the foot of the old oak, daubing away as if her life depended on the amount of colour laid on in a given time. Reining up, he immediately took measures for introducing his presence to her notice.

He began by a faint, apologetic "Hem, hem!" Then one more decided "Hem, hem!" Then a cascade of prolonged "Hem, hems!" gradually waxing louder at each repetition. All this proving unavailing, he next tried talking to his horse and splashing in the water, with the same unsatis-

factory result. Beginning to feel the state of affairs becoming uncomfortable, he called out, in a low, insinuating voice—

"Good morning, Miss Lane."

No answer—a pause; then in a very audible whisper—

"Miss Lane, will you forgive me?"

No response.

"Hang it! you must," exclaimed he, plunging his spurs into the grey, and dashing through the river before Agnes could utter a word of remonstrance.

Jumping from his horse, he walked up to where she stood, and taking her hand, said—

"I am sure now I am forgiven."

Then, seeing how really frightened she was, he assured her over and over again—

"That he and the mare were all right."

Breaking a twig from a conveniently low bough, and sticking it in the ground, he passed his bridle over it, and so picketed the mare; who, taking the act for gospel, never once attempted to move during the interview.

Agnes still stood watching Captain Nolan's movements, without saying a word. So, taking the initiative, he threw himself on the ground by the side of the water-colour débris, and opened the conversation.

"I tell you what it is, Miss Lane, you must think me an awful brute. Here, I have only seen you twice—the first time I manage, in my confounded blundering way, to mortally offend you, and the second I succeed in completely spoiling your sketch."

This he said, holding up for inspection the unfortunate water-colour, which presented such a grotesque appearance of smudge that they simultaneously broke into a laugh; and so the ice was broken.

"Now, Miss Lane, if you will sit down again, and tell me all the wicked names you have been calling me for the last few days, I will pick up every one of those paints, and put them back in their right places, as far as my mental capacity will allow."

Reseating herself, Agnes at last gasped out her fears—

"Do you know, Captain Nolan, you might have been drowned?"

"Ah! I am afraid of no such good luck. My silken cord is already spun."

"But," persisted Agnes, "if you had been, I should have caused your death." And then, with a laugh, added, "Only fancy poor Mr. Græme's horror, when taking his evening walk, suddenly to find you on his lawn!"

"But if I had been drowned, how could that effect my appearance on Mr. Græme's lawn?"

"Do not you know that everything that is put into the river at this point is washed on to the rectory lawn? When I was a child"—this with a smile and look to show he was quite forgiven—"it used to be my great delight to throw in here every conceivable thing I could collect, and then run down to the rectory to see Mr. Græme's astonishment at the mysterious apparition on his lawn of old hats, sardine boxes, white satin shoes, and a miscellaneous collection of flowers and tracts."

"What in the name of wisdom could have put into a child's head such an odd idea?"

"Please do not think it original; for old John the coachman, who was my playmate in those days, first showed me this spot, and put it into my head by telling me why it is called Death's Hollow."

"As I have not the pleasure of old John's acquaintance, and do not see my way to a speedy introduction in that quarter, will you have pity on my ignorance, and in the words of the poet, 'tell me why'?"

"Certainly; but won't you be bored? I thought all men hated long stories."

"Not when told by pretty lips," thought he; but said, "I plead to being the one exception—so please unfold the tale."

"You must know that where our house now is there used to be a nunnery, and where the rectory stands, a monastery. No doubt you have noticed the ruins in the garden?"

"Yes," said he, hacking with his penknife at the trunk of the old oak. "Thought they belonged to a castle or monastery—very much the same thing, I should fancy, in those days; both kept an idle, good-for-nothing set of scamps within their walls, like our modern workhouses. But I beg pardon, I'm all attention."

"Now, the monks used to walk up and down the path by the river as far as the arch of the bridge on their side, and the nuns used to walk up and down the path by the river as far as the arch on their side; and dire was the punishment that awaited the unhappy monk or nun who crossed the magic line. It was in the year of our Lord one thousand four hundred and twenty-nine, that one day a powerful lord from a far distant country left a beautiful young lady

at the nunnery, with strict injunctions that she was to be converted into a thorough-paced nun—I mean take all the veils, and that sort of thing—in the shortest possible time. To this enforced incarceration the fair damsel highly objected, and finding all her bewailings in vain, spent her days in wandering, a melancholy object, up and down the riverside, like an unquiet spirit working out its hundred years on the bank of the Styx. One day she had reached the line of demarcation, and was about to turn, when she perceived on the other side a monk, who, on turning, raised his eyes and caught sight of her. There was a mutual cry of 'Edgar!' 'Louise!' and the next instant they were in each other's arms. It seems they had been betrothed; but Edgar's fortune turning out to be only the possession of his sword, the powerful lord broke off the engagement on behalf of a richer suitor. The young lady, proving obstinate, was immured in this nunnery; while Edgar, in a fit of despair, buried himself in the monastery; and as I have already said, by a remarkable coincidence they met, and of course planned an escape. That evening after vespers they fled—whither, was a question 'not dreamt of in their philosophy'. Consequently, both being utterly ignorant of the bearings of the country, they lost their way; and after wandering about many hours, at length found themselves in Death's Hollow, where they agreed to hide until the first streak of morn should appear; and being very much fatigued with their wanderings, soon fell asleep. In the meantime the river had risen, and, overflowing its banks, swept round the Hollow. Clutching in its remorseless grasp the unwary sleepers, it hurried down to the weir, where it finally deposited them on the bank beneath the Lord High Abbot's room. Very much scandalized was that saintly man, on looking out of his window next morning, to see his favourite son and youngest daughter lifeless corpses on the grass. Of the gossip it occasioned I am unable to speak."

"So that is the reason why this pretty spot is called by a hideous name. Very remarkable, and no doubt strictly true," said Captain Nolan, in a dreamy kind of voice, as she concluded.

From his tone, Agnes knew his thoughts were not with his words; and wondered what he could be thinking about. After a pause he looked up, and said—

"Old John must be useless to you now

as a companion, why should not I take his place?"

She hesitated, but did not know any reason why he should not; and before she could bring forward any objection, he cut in with—

"Then I consider it a settled thing; let's shake hands over it."

He put out his, she gave him hers. Was it only her hand he took? Certainly she knew of nothing else, and could not tell why the crimson flushed into her cheeks as she felt his large hand close on her little trembling one; while she kept her eyes steadily fixed on the ground, until roused by the falling of a leaf on her ungloved hand. Now, I strongly doubt the authenticity of that leaf, and fancy a fair moustache had more to do with it.

Suppressing a sigh and a half-muttered "I am making a fool of myself," he released her hand, and asked—

"Who live in the modern Brummagem house opposite my land?"

"The highly cultivated family of Brown-smith."

"Why," said he, propping himself up with one arm, "hadn't a notion who the people were! I dine with them to-night."

"So do we."

"Thank Heaven!" and again he subsided on the grass. "But how on earth is a fellow supposed to maintain a respectable countenance while addressing people with such an ungodly complication of names? The very thought is enough."

And he laughingly said, while shaking hands with imaginary people in the air, "How do you do, Mr. Brown Smith? Hope Mrs. Brown Smith is well, and all the little Brown Smiths."

"Oh, Captain Nolan," said she, laughing, "you are all wrong. In the first place, they are not Brown Smith, but Brownsmith, pronounced Brūnsmith; which, as the mistress of Islington Court will inform you, shows they came over with the Germans. And secondly, they have only one child, a daughter called Julia."

"Ah, I see, Mr., Mrs., and Miss B. S. You do not object to the abbreviation?" said Captain Nolan.

"Yes I do; for my aunt is always pulling me up for calling them so."

"I perceive you have not yet quite forgotten old John's tuition."

"I shall when I have learnt a little more

mild swearing from you," said she, colouring with mortification.

Captain Nolan's reply has been lost to the world; for at that moment they were startled by the church clock striking the hour of six. With a mutual exclamation of "Dinner at seven!" he jumped on his horse, and she gathered up her water-colours.

Then, for the first time, dawned upon her a fact which, for some time past, has been fidgeting the matter-of-fact reader. Going up to the grey, and laying her hand on the animal's fine neck, she said, in a pitiable voice—

"You must be wet through, and you will catch your death of cold."

At which remark, he only laughed, saying—

"It is nothing, after camping out for weeks in pouring rain. But the question is, how am I to get back? I think it is very evident the only path is the one I came by; and a second dousing will take away all fear of cold."

This idea of his swimming the river a second time made Agnes exceedingly uncomfortable; but seeing it was the only practicable way, she was obliged to give her consent.

"But you will promise never to ride across again?"

"Never! if you will give me leave to come any other way."

Said she, with a woman's argument—

"I cannot give you leave—the land is not mine; but anybody is allowed to cross the foot-bridge, and there is a path to the right that leads here."

"That will do. Au revoir."

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XLI.

THE baronet started as the door was opened, and shrank into the farthest corner upon perceiving Lady Georgina advancing towards him with extended arm; for he felt uncertain, as he afterwards said, whether she meant to shake hands or box his ears.

However, he was presently undeceived.

"Oh, Sir John!" exclaimed her ladyship, with great volubility; "how can I—spare my confusion. Oh! my poor nerves!"

And, overcome by her emotions, Lady Georgina sank into her husband's chair, and fanned herself with her voluminous pocket handkerchief, thereby diffusing an almost insupportable odour of musk through the study.

The baronet, unaccustomed of late to such exhibitions of nervous sensibility, imagined her ladyship was about to faint—though she had no such intention—and suggested sal volatile, and then cold water.

"Thank you, Sir John," exclaimed Lady Georgina, languidly; "thank you very much. I shall be quite well directly. You must excuse a mother's feelings—I feel so overpowered."

"I may then hope that your ladyship approves of my suit?" inquired the baronet, with some trepidation in his voice and manner.

"Approve, Sir John!" exclaimed her ladyship; "I am sure we are highly honoured."

The baronet, who disliked flattery of all things, hastened to say—

"May I hope that my proposal has not been unacceptable to Miss St. Clair?"

"No, no, not at all; quite the contrary," replied Lady Georgina, giving utterance rather to her own wishes than the reality, yet without the slightest intention of telling an untruth.

"She has been so taken by surprise, Sir John," said the vicar, "that she has scarcely yet arrived at a comprehension of the great honour you have paid her and us."

"Honour! pooh! it is I that am honoured," replied the baronet.

"We are," returned the Lady Georgina, with a would-be stately inclination of her head. "My family is but as of yesterday compared to yours, Sir John."

"We only date from the time of the third William, Lady Georgina."

"In Ireland," asserted her ladyship, who was great in genealogical lore; "but in England from William the Conqueror."

"I am not prepared to dispute the question with you, Lady Georgina," replied the baronet, with a smile; "and I am sure you will forgive me for asking what answer you bring."

"What answer, Sir John? Why—why, that—"

"You will have to plead your cause in person, Sir John," interposed the vicar; "that is all the grace we have been able to obtain for you so far. You must do the rest

yourself; for I would not—we would not like to have the least appearance of coercing Louisa's inclinations."

"Certainly not, Mr. St. Clair—certainly not," concurred the baronet.

"I need scarcely say," he continued, "that the settlements shall be everything you wish. There are large accumulations at my bankers' and elsewhere, which I propose to invest in the purchase of a house in London, and in modernizing Ardmore."

"Buy as many houses as you please in London, Sir John," exclaimed the vicar, with already something of the father-in-law in his tone; "but I trust you will not touch Ardmore—you would only spoil it if you did. They build no houses like it nowadays."

"No, indeed," exclaimed her ladyship.

"You will excuse my impatience, Lady Georgina," said Sir John; "but at my age a man has not much time to spare."

"Your age!" cried her ladyship, with well-acted surprise. "Why, you cannot possibly—"

"My dear," interrupted her husband, "Sir John is, very naturally, anxious; and, I may say, so am I. Sir John, we will wait here for your return."

The baronet bowed, and without further delay proceeded to the drawing-room, where he found Louisa reclining in an arm-chair by the window, pretending to read a volume of Cowper's poems.

"Miss St. Clair," mildly exclaimed the baronet, after closing the door behind him, "I have your father and mother's permission to address you upon a subject of vast importance."

"Had you not better sit down, Sir John?" asked the young lady, without raising her eyes from her book; for the baronet continued to stand before her, and—as she afterwards confided to my wife—she felt afraid if he went on his knees he might have been unable to get up again without assistance.

Sir John took a chair, and placing it opposite the young lady, sat down. He was decidedly embarrassed; and no doubt the situation was far from reassuring.

A silence that seemed an age, but was, probably, of no more than a minute's duration, ensued, during which Sir John continued to gaze at Miss St. Clair, and that young lady, with equal earnestness, at her book.

At last she smiled, whether at some passage she was reading or at the absurdity of the situation Sir John could not determine; but the spell was broken, and the baronet plucked up courage to say—

"You are aware, Miss St. Clair, of the object I have in view in addressing you to-day?"

"I am aware," replied Louisa, softly, and without looking up.

"Hem! may I hope that—that my suit has your approbation?"

No reply.

An embarrassing silence again ensued; Miss St. Clair continued to read, apparently unconscious of her admirer's presence, and as she read she smiled. Now, a smiling mood became her—a fact of which she was, doubtless, fully conscious.

The baronet, momentarily more and more enamoured, ventured presently to say—

"Miss St. Clair—Louisa—"

Still no notice.

Driven to desperation, he spoke up—

"Louisa, I love you; will you be my wife?"

Miss St. Clair looked up with well-acted surprise.

"Did you speak to me, Sir John?"

The carmine flush that overspread her face and neck, as she put the question, showed plainly enough that she had heard and understood what had been said to her; but love is proverbially blind, and the baronet repeated his avowal.

This time the flush was replaced by a deadly pallor, and shivering slightly, Louisa made reply—

"I beg you will not speak to me like that, Sir John."

As she spoke rather indistinctly, and in a low tone of voice, the baronet did not exactly catch the sense of her answer; but interpreting her confusion in his favour, he drew his chair closer to hers, and for the third time made confession of his sentiments, and attempted to take the girl's hand. Louisa, however, hastily snatched it away, and pushed back her chair, so as to increase the distance between them as much as possible.

Sir John began to suspect that all was not right, but once more said—

"I love you; will you marry me, Louisa?"

The young lady stood up, and faced the old man, saying—

"I cannot marry you, Sir John. I will

not. Nobody shall force me to take you—never!"

"Not against your will, certainly not," cried the baronet. "But listen to me. I do not ask you to love me—that at my age I know to be impossible—but if you can like me just a little, I will be satisfied; and there will not be a wish you can form that I will not try to gratify, if only you will consent to your parents' wishes and to mine."

"Sir John, it is impossible."

"Am I too late?"

"You are."

"You love another?"

"I do."

"Miss St. Clair," replied the baronet, standing up, and speaking in a sad, subdued tone of voice, "there is nothing more to be said. I trust I am incapable of persisting in my suit, after the avowal you have made. May you be as happy as I would have tried to make you, and as I wish you, and as you deserve to be. You may rely upon my discretion."

"Thank you, Sir John," replied Louisa, with emotion—"thank you for your good wishes. You will soon forget one so every way unworthy of you."

"Never!" exclaimed the baronet. "I shall never forget you, Miss St. Clair; and as to being unworthy, it is I who am undeserving."

And so saying, Sir John bowed and retired.

It would be uninteresting, and serve no useful purpose, to recount the anger of Lady Georgina, and the regret, not to say annoyance, of the vicar, when they had learned the unsuccessful issue of the baronet's suit with their daughter.

"I only wish he had asked me!" exclaimed Augusta, when she had been made acquainted with the honour proffered to and refused by her sister. "I'd have agreed to be Lady Middleton!"

"And to have Miss Middleton for your step-daughter!" said Louisa, turning up a nose of scorn at the bare idea of such a thing.

"What odds!" laughed the volatile Augusta. "If she wasn't civil, she might go and live by herself, and see how she liked it."

Lady Georgina was present during the delivery of the above remarks, and took comfort therefrom, setting her wits to work

to bring about a match between the baronet and her second daughter—with what result, time will doubtless tell.

CHAPTER XLII.

SIR JOHN, after having taken leave of the vicar and Lady Georgina, was in the act of stepping into his trap, in no very enviable frame of mind, when the sound of wheels and horses' feet was heard on the gravel walk, and Miss Middleton's pony phaeton was directly afterwards seen, driven by that lady herself, with Robert M'Lachlan by her side, and attended by her groom, who sat behind.

To say that the baronet looked astonished would be but to convey a feeble idea of the amazement and confusion that were depicted on his countenance.

Miss Middleton's expression, on the other hand, was one of triumph; but she smiled graciously at her father.

"Dear me, papa!" she exclaimed, "who would have thought of meeting you here?"

A speech which caused Bob to open his eyes, and slightly shrug his shoulders; for the certainty of the baronet's being found at the vicarage, and his motive for calling there, had formed the staple of their conversation all the way from Dumfarnaghalee.

Miss Middleton was an adept, however, in the art of feigning surprise, and perhaps in the use of that verb in the abstract; for she had affected to believe that the younger daughter of the vicar, and not the elder, was the object of her parent's unseasonable admiration, and had quite persuaded her companion of the truth of her assertions—which, indeed, he had no reason to doubt.

The baronet, however, recovered himself in a moment, and replied—

"Yes, my dear, here I am. I had some business to transact with the vicar."

"Was it an interesting kind of business, papa?"

"Yes, my dear; very much so. How do you do, Mr. M'Lachlan?"

Robert replied that he was quite well, and hoped the baronet was.

"Yes, thank you. By the way, Mary, I shall not be home to dinner; for I am now going in to Pennyletter with Mr. Dobbie on election business, and very probably I may not return before to-morrow afternoon."

"Very well, papa. Shall I bring Louisa back to stay with me until your return?"

"As you please, my dear," replied the

baronet, with an air of complete indifference.

His daughter was foiled; her father's presence of mind had not altogether deserted him, and she was unable to form any decided opinion as to the nature or issue of the business which had brought him to Moighrath.

Miss Middleton looked uncommonly well that day; indeed, she had taken particular pains with her toilet, was dressed in purple velvet, and wrapped in rich furs, for she had not yet grown accustomed to the chilly climate of the "Gem of the ocean;" and in secret pined, just as I had done, for the more genial atmosphere of her native land. But she, too, as well as myself, overcame that painful sense of longing in the course of time.

Lady Georgina was delighted to see her visitor, and so was Augusta.

"Won't you put up your horses, Miss Middleton?" inquired her ladyship.

But Miss Middleton declined.

"I have come especially to take Louisa back with me, Lady Georgina. I hope she is at home."

"She has just gone to Betty Kirkwood's," replied Augusta, "and won't be back, I know, for an hour or two."

"Are you sure?" asked her mother.

"Yes, mamma, certain."

"Then, my dear, you had better send some one after her to tell her that Miss Middleton is here, and is waiting for her."

The conversation that ensued was of the usual desultory description peculiar to morning calls. I shall therefore pass it over, and take the opportunity of reverting to some of the events of the past few days, or I might say weeks.

It will be remembered that Miss Middleton and Robert, on the occasion of their last recorded meeting, parted with the understanding, on the lady's part at least, that he was still bound by the terms of their agreement to follow up his suit with Miss St. Clair; and he had endeavoured, with a heavy heart, on two or three occasions, to redeem his promise; but had failed in every attempt.

He was a daily visitor at Ardmore during the same time, and usually passed some hours alone with the heiress, so that it began to be rumoured abroad that they were engaged; for not only did they sit and walk together, but took long rides or drives in each other's company almost every day. And

yet, so far from the popular belief being about to be verified, their marriage was becoming more and more improbable—not to say impossible—from day to day; and that for several reasons.

For instance, Miss Middleton, who, under other circumstances, might have discovered her liking for her handsome new acquaintance ripening into love, found her old passion revive as soon as the mysterious disappearance of the rector's wife seemed to offer a probability, however remote, of her still cherished hopes being at some time realized. And, again, the fear of her father's marrying Louisa St. Clair, who she knew was attached to Robert, made her strain every nerve to unite those young people to each other; in which view she lost no opportunity of bringing them together, and praising them to each other.

With Louisa she acted cautiously, as she found that young lady rather disposed to resent her interference; but with my brother-in-law it was all plain sailing. She exalted the perfections of the vicar's daughter, and unduly depreciated herself; and her efforts were not without success.

Robert, at first, was firmly convinced that his attachment to the heiress was unalterable, and told her so; but young men of twenty-one or two do not continue for any great length of time to be violently in love with ladies, however great their attractions, who are several years their senior; and so, by degrees, he came to agree with the heiress that a marriage between them would be absurd.

As he gradually arrived at this conclusion—greatly to Miss Middleton's relief—he also became more and more convinced of the numerous good qualities and the by no means insignificant personal attractions of Louisa St. Clair.

Partly with a view to ascertaining what her father's object in visiting Moighrath might be, and partly to bring matters to a satisfactory termination between the young people whom she had taken under her protection, Miss Middleton had proposed to drive my brother-in-law to the vicarage on the eventful Monday when the baronet's offer of marriage to Miss St. Clair had been declined by that young lady; and Robert, nothing loth, agreeing, they arrived, as we have seen, at Moighrath just in time to witness Sir John's departure, and to find Louisa gone on an errand of mercy to a

poor woman in the neighbourhood who was very ill.

"Come in and sit down, at all events, Miss Middleton, while I send for Louisa."

"No, thanks, Lady Georgina; if you will kindly tell me what direction she has taken, I will drive after her and bring her back myself."

"You could not drive the way she has gone, Miss Middleton; for Betty's cottage is in the fields, and there are three or four stiles in the way."

"Then, I suppose there is no alternative for us but to accept your hospitality, Lady Georgina," exclaimed the baronet's daughter, springing from the phaeton before Robert could come to her assistance.

Then tossing her whip to her groom, who was standing at the horses' heads, she followed Lady Georgina into the house; but perceiving that Robert was not with them, immediately turned back to the porch, where he was standing with the younger Miss St. Clair, and commanded him in a very peremptory manner to come in. He immediately followed the ladies into the drawing-room.

Robert the stable boy found Miss St. Clair at the poor woman's cabin, and delivered Lady Georgina's message with tolerable accuracy.

"Bother!" exclaimed the young lady; "let her wait."

"Am I to tell her that, miss?" asked the stable boy, with gravity.

"No, say nothing—say I will be back in a few minutes."

Then, after a few kind words to the old woman, Louisa hurried homewards.

"My dear child," exclaimed Miss Middleton, kissing her on both cheeks, "you are good to have made such haste. I have come out on purpose to bring you back with me to Ardmore, and your mamma says you may stay until to-morrow, when I will drive you back myself; or, if I can't, papa will."

Louisa coloured—

"I hope you will excuse me, Miss Middleton, I—"

"Miss Middleton!" exclaimed the heiress.

"You must really excuse me, Mary," repeated Miss St. Clair. "I do not feel very well, and would prefer staying at home to going out."

"If you are not well, Louisa, that is exactly the reason why you should go out, my dear; there is nothing like change of air

for reviving low spirits, which seems to be your complaint at present. I am a doctor's daughter, you see, and speak with authority. Is it not so, Mr. M'Lachlan?" she continued, turning to Robert.

"You are quite right, Miss Middleton," he replied; "change of scene is about the best possible remedy for such cases."

"You are both mistaken, then," said Louisa. "I am not at all in low spirits, quite the contrary."

"No matter," replied the heiress. "I have driven over here—no light achievement either, considering the state of the roads—on purpose to take you back with me, my dear; and come you must. There will be no one at home but ourselves, for papa is going, or I should say has gone, to Pennyletter with Mr. Dobbie on some electioneering business, he said, and will not return before to-morrow afternoon."

Lady Georgina, who imagined that a sight of the luxury at Ardmore might have the effect of causing her daughter to change her mind, said—

"You had better go, my dear, the change will do you good. You are really not looking at all well."

"I will go with you, dear, if you wish," said Louisa to Miss Middleton, in obedience to her mother's implied command.

"If I wish it!" exclaimed the heiress; "my dear child, do you suppose I would ask you a second time, or come a first, if I did not very particularly wish to have you with me? It is not my habit to say one thing and think another."

"Any one that has the pleasure of your acquaintance, Miss Middleton, must know that you are sincerity itself," sententially declared Lady Georgina.

"I dare say," replied the heiress, in a very off-hand manner. "Will it take you long to get ready, Louisa?"

"No," replied that young lady. "Sarah will put up all I shall want in a minute or two."

"Very well, dear—make haste."

Louisa re-entered the room after a very short absence, when Miss Middleton immediately rose to take leave.

"Good afternoon, Lady Georgina," she said. "I will hold myself responsible for Louisa's safe custody, and will bring her back to you to-morrow. Louisa, you must sit beside me, dear; and Robert will drive us home. Mind you are careful, Bob."

It was an act of very great self-denial on Miss Middleton's part to resign the reins to any one; but on the present occasion she had an end of very great importance to attain—namely, to bring matters to an issue between her two young friends.

TABLE TALK.

THE Bishop of Manchester has been speaking his and a good many other people's minds at Longridge. He says that labourers receive much higher pay than they did of old; but "at present the only result he could discover from their higher wages was that a great deal more beer was consumed." It is very true, but we must not grumble. The brewers make a great deal of money; but then they often build a church.

PLAYING AT POLITICS, even nowadays, seems to be an expensive game. Dr. Baxter Langley, who did not get his seat at Greenwich, has just received the bill—a trifle over one thousand guineas. It will do to encourage "the working man" who is blessed with notions of going into Parliament.

AS FAR AS money matters go, we do not show up very badly as compared to our neighbours. Here is the account of a few wills just proved:—That of the Empress Dowager of Austria, as far as her property goes under British jurisdiction, £8,000; while plain Mr. Wheeler, of Wandsworth, leaves £350,000; Sir Ralph Howard, £180,000; Sir John Anson, £30,000; Mr. French, £30,000; and Mr. Peele, £70,000. It must be a very curious sensation, that of feeling you have £350,000 of your own. Many live and die and never know it.

THE HERRING FISHERY is announced as over for the season, and the pilchard fishery of the West of England has already, or will soon, have closed. How is it that, while herrings reach London fresh and dried by the million, one never sees a pilchard, the greater part of the huge takes of which fish are salted and sent off to the Mediterranean? Speaking from experience, the pilchard is a rich, good eating fish; and probably it is prejudice which keeps it and half a score more capital fish from the London market. Hake is quite a mainstay with the Cornish people, and is prime eating; but

the Cornishmen have their prejudices, for they look with disgust upon any one who talks of eating skate.

IN A LATE charge against a gardener of giving a barmaid some mushrooms, knowing them to be of a poisonous nature, the judge observed that "things existed so very much like mushrooms, but which were in reality deadly poisonous, that even persons well acquainted with the nature of mushrooms could not detect the difference." With all due respect for the remarks of the learned judge, we beg to differ, and to say that a very little study of the varieties of fungi will enable a person to tell the difference between the ordinary and poisonous species.

TALKING OF CATS and the Cat Show, why have the Manx cats no tails? One begins to have faith in the old fable of the fox without a tail. He must have had a fellow-sufferer in the cat tribe who went home mutilated from a trap, and on announcing to his brethren that it was the fashion to go tailless, have found them so open to conviction that the custom grew not only entailed but general.

A GOOD DEAL of agitation is going on about the high price of coals, and meetings are being held in all directions. One feels a little doubtful about endorsing the notions of the speakers; coals are dear enough, we know, and care is certainly necessitated in their consumption. This stirring seems to savour of the poker between the bars, and the consequent rapid rate of combustion. Better to bear the ills, &c.

THE BUBBLE—we mean the balloon—has burst, and we shall not have the pleasure of seeing Professor Wise and Co. reach our shores after their Atlantic voyage. It seems very like an advertising dodge from beginning to end. If we remember rightly, the conjuror of some years ago was quite ready to keep to his promise of getting into a quart bottle, if one holding exactly that quantity could be found.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK return to themselves the right of translation.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 304.

October 25, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XL.

A NIGHT IN A CELL.



It would, perhaps, be hardly fair to blame policemen for their peculiarities; for many of their failings are, we forget, not peculiar to the policeman, but to man in general. All the same, if something happens—if they carry out a task

in a way that we should hardly have noticed from an ordinary mortal, we come down heavily upon the constable—morally, not physically—and say, "That's your police, all over."

This is called forth from the fact that a great deal of the justice meted out in our police-stations—not courts—by the inspector on duty is strongly tinged by faith in dress as allied to position in society. If a prisoner be rough and ill-clad, and the prosecutor arrayed in nineteenth century purple and fine linen—which is, of course, black cloth—your policeman will, of a certainty, say, "You sir" to the former, and "Sir" to the latter; and be disposed to look upon his as the words of truth and wisdom, while he will regard the rough and ill-clad prisoner as the greatest liar under the sun.

It was a case in point upon the arrival at the station, poor Rivière having had rather an unpleasant time of it, inasmuch as he had been most desirous, on the way, of entering into explanations, and had made stoppages for expostulation—all of which had been looked upon as so many feeble attempts to escape, or enlist the sympathies of the crowd in his favour; and judging from actual facts, as well as from tradition, there is no one upon whom your police-constable would sooner "come down hard" than upon him who invites help from the spectators.

Rivière, then, reached the police-station in a condition that was far from likely to obtain sympathy from that Rhadamanthus of the time, the inspector in charge; for the prisoner's face was swollen and marked with blood, his shabby garments were pulled all awry, and he was in a state of voluble excitement when placed in the little iron dock, which almost precluded any one from speaking but himself.

"It was a case of insult," he cried. "Sir Richard—"

"Will you hold your tongue?" cried the inspector. "Let the gentleman make his charge."

"But—"

"Give over with you," said the policeman who had brought him in.

Then Sir Richard began to make his statement.

"I tell you," said Rivière, "it was—"

"Come, none o' that, now," was the next admonition; and Rivière was again silent, while Sir Richard advanced enough for the inspector to enter the charge—more than he had done half an hour before, when two voluble women, tattered and torn by warfare, had been before him, and he had told them both to "be off home, and not quarrel any more."

And now Rivière tried to appeal once more; but there was not much chance of

his being heard at that late hour of the night. And here were the facts: a baronet, residing in Grosvenor-square, gave a very shabby-looking foreigner, who said he had no address, into custody on a charge of assault, witnessed by the cabman who brought the baronet from his club.

Result: Sir Richard Lawler, very bitter and angry, walked back to his cab; while Louis Rivière, choking with indignation, was hurried off to a cell, where he sat in the dark, meditating revenge.

Certainly, one policeman did give him a hint—

"Tell the inspector your address, and send for some friends to bail you out."

But what friends had he? Who would be his securities? And, besides, just then his mind was in too great a state of chaos for it to hold anything more than rage and hatred against Sir Richard Lawler.

It was hard work, though, to sit in that close cell, with a policeman coming from time to time to flash a light over him through the little grating in the door, and make sure that he was neither in a fit, nor suspending himself, in a moment of mad fury, by his stockings or handkerchief.

But Rivière had no such thoughts; for now he was in trouble about Marie, and the old feelings of the French prison came over him, making him shudder again. Then he thought of her anxiety, in spite of the past day's anger. What would she think of his absence? Heaven, what a position! And all brought about by the brutal letter and insolence of Sir Richard.

It was a night to be remembered, as its small hours passed sluggishly by, the prisoner's eyes hardly closing. Now some human beast, furiously drunk, would be dragged in, howling, cursing, and blaspheming with twenty-demon power, forced into a cell roughly, and perhaps rather viciously, by the capturing constables; and small wonder, when he had been striking out, right and left, till his arms were mastered, after which he had made up for the deprivation by kicking with all his might. Twice over this occurred, with the same result; that the prisoner immediately settled down into a drunken stupor, to be heard no more, save as the emitter of heavy, stertorous snores.

Perhaps Rivière would settle himself with his back in a corner, and begin, as he grew cooler, to think about his prospects of re-

lease in the morning; for he now began to feel sure that Sir Richard would never dare to face him in the court. Then, feeble with fasting and his previous day's exertions, his head would fall upon his chest, and for a few moments he would doze, but only to be roused again by the shriek of some gin-mad harridan, borne in upon a stretcher, and who, upon being relegated to the comparative freedom of a cell, began, immediately upon being left alone, to resent the solitude, and beat furiously at the door, making the place re-echo with her cries. This served to set others off; voices would be heard at gratings, asking if the police were murdering the "poor woman;" while others raved, roared, and cursed, till silenced by the gaoler rapping sharply at door after door—at times, too, threatening the more obstreperous of the inmates.

Rivière's cell, though, seemed to take up the largest share of his attention; and, not content with casting a light and peering through the bars, he would open the door and speak to his wild, haggard little prisoner, who raised his face and responded with a short, sharp shake of the head.

Rivière's longest sleep was not of more than a few minutes' duration, and from this he woke with a start, alarmed by louder cries than usual. There seemed to be a good deal of light, too; and for an instant he felt ready to start up, panic-stricken; for it seemed to him that there was a fire once more in his prison, and that his life was in peril.

"Let it come," he said, sadly, as he sank back in his place; "life is not worth much to me."

Morning at last—coming very slowly, and with weak, cold rays to the cells of the police-station. The noisy occupants had settled down, one by one, to sink, for the most part, into the stupor caused by drink; but there was no feeling of calm for Rivière. The cool air came softly through the little grating; but it did not take the fever from the cheek he laid against the wall, as he now stood longing for freedom.

For as he thought more and more of the position, it seemed the height of folly to imagine that Sir Richard would come forward. He would certainly be content with having ridded himself of his assailant, and condone the assault for the sake of avoiding the annoyance that must result from a

public inquiry. And as to the magistrate, no doubt he would be sharply admonished by him, and then set at liberty.

CHAPTER XLI.

FIVE POUNDS OR A MONTH.

THE hour for the hearing of his case seemed to Rivière as if it would never come. The morning was cold, dull, and depressing; and he needed not the sinking sense of hunger, the aching head, and bruised limbs to make him thoroughly wretched. How thought, too, would come, full of inventions of troubles that might never happen; especially as he heard cell door after door opened, and the rough, sharp voice of the police summoning the offenders, some of whom had to be shaken from their heavy, drunken sleep before they staggered out.

One hour—two hours! Would his case never be called?

He was busy, though, planning and determining what he would say in his defence; and if Sir Richard Lawler did appear, how he would shame him by telling in open court of the cowardice of his nature, and how he had refused to give the satisfaction of a gentleman.

"These islanders do not like duelling; but still they have their ideas of honour," he said to himself.

And then he once more applied his face to the grating, waiting till a policeman should come near enough to be addressed.

At last one came.

"How long will it be before I am called up?" Rivière inquired.

"Don't you fret yourself," was the response; "you'll be called up a deal sooner than you'll like, I'll lay."

Then the man passed on to another cell, where he led out one of the noisy gin victims—mad and uproarious the night before; this morning, limp, whining, and tearful, a bundle of dirty rags more than a woman; but which addressed the policeman as "my dear," and begged hard for "a drink o' water."

But the longest period of suspense comes to an end at last, and in his excitable fashion Rivière was ready to leap out upon his door being opened, hurrying along by the side of the officer to the court.

He had done what he could to make himself presentable; but a station cell is not well furnished with toilet requisites, and he

knew that his appearance must militate terribly against him, and he could not help asking himself, bitterly, what there was to distinguish him from the commonest offender who had gone up before.

The buzzing of voices in the court interrupted his thoughts; and before he could thoroughly realize his position, he was standing in the dock, before a host of faces, and listening to the voice of the clerk.

Would Sir Richard appear? That was the question which filled Rivière's mind, to the exclusion of court, magistrate, all else. A few moments would decide, for his name was called now in a loud voice.

A thrill of excitement ran through the prisoner's frame as he waited what seemed an interminable space of time for the response, which came at last, and he saw the baronet step quietly up into the box, with his face discoloured and a narrow strip of black sticking-plaster across one temple.

He was perfectly composed, and studiously refrained from looking in the direction of the man he accused, as he calmly stated his case.

Rivière bore this for awhile; but an assertion the baronet made was like the spark to a train of powder, and he began to expostulate in loud tones.

"It is not true, it is not true, Sir Richard."

"Silence, sir!" exclaimed the magistrate.

"But I cannot be silent when this man makes such statements," exclaimed Rivière.

"Hold your peace, and wait. You shall have an opportunity of defending yourself by-and-by."

Rivière set his teeth hard, glanced at the prosecutor, and listened while Sir Richard went on, glibly enough, telling of how he was returning from his club, and had reached his own door, when he was set upon by the defendant.

"But why—why?" cried Rivière, excitedly. "Did you not refuse me the satisfaction of a gentleman?"

"I refuse to answer such questions," said Sir Richard, haughtily. "I keep to my statement that I was violently assaulted by the defendant."

"But you did strike me," cried Rivière.

"Of course," said Sir Richard, "in self-defence."

And then, Rivière being silenced, the baronet went on again, carefully suppressing all allusions as to past knowledge of the defendant, and all reasons for the attack.

Here Rivière would have once more dashed in with eager declarations, but he was again checked, threatened with punishment for contempt of court, and at last thoroughly silenced; to stand glaring angrily from one to the other of those present, as if he felt himself entirely surrounded by enemies.

Then the cabman was put in the box and sworn.

"John Judson" his name was, he said; "and this here gent—the big un, not the little un—come out of the Rag—"

"Out of the what?"

"Out of the Rag—the club, you know—and 'Drive me home,' he sez. 'Where's that, sir?' I sez, laughing; for the gent was a bit on, your worship."

"Confine yourself to the simple facts, my good fellow," said the magistrate.

"That is fax, your worship," said the man. "Why, the gent don't go for to say as he warn't a bit on?"

"I'll admit that I was somewhat excited," said Sir Richard, from the body of the court.

"There is no occasion for you to speak, sir," exclaimed the magistrate, tetchily. "Really, this is most irregular. Go on, sir, at once."

"Well, your worship," continued the cabman, 'Drive me home,' he sez; and at last I got down and helped him to get his card-kis out, and read his number under a lamp, and drove him to Grosvenor-square."

"Go on," said the clerk, who was taking down the deposition.

"Yes, your worship; and I s'pose the ride pulled him together a bit, for he got out steady enough, when up comes the little chap—"

"If you mean the defendant, say so," interrupted the magistrate.

"Just so, your wor—I mean, sir—up comes the little defendant, and sez something, and then one hits t'other, and t'other hits back, and they was lugging one another awful for a bit, till I stopped 'em, and the pleece came—when it was all over," he added, in a low voice.

"And you will swear that the defendant assaulted the prosecutor?"

"Oh, theer warn't no doubt about that, your worship; he 'salted him, fast enough, and t'other 'salted him back—ot! He took it out of 'im again pretty well."

"That will do—stand down."

The cabman stood down, and gave place to a very streety-looking individual, who swore boldly to the assault, and stated his conviction that the "little furrener" meant the gent's watch and chain.

"Canaille!" muttered Rivière, contemptuously.

Lastly came the policeman, who deposed to taking the charge, and finding the greatest difficulty in keeping the defendant at bay. He was about the bloodthirstiest man of his size the constable ever recollected to have met with; and was offering to fight the prosecutor with pistols or swords all the way to the station.

Rivière made his defence, which was cut short; and the magistrate delivered a speech in a very thick, unctuous tone of voice, and quite ignoring the fact that there were half a dozen solicitors and barristers impatiently awaiting the turn of their clients, who were still in the cells of the court. But the gentleman in question loved to hear his voice enunciating moral platitudes, and he made a point of telling Sir Richard that it was very evident that there was something disreputable at the bottom of this case; though it was not the business of the Court to probe that to the end. It was enough that it had been made out to the satisfaction of the bench that a violent assault had been committed, and for that assault it was his duty to punish the defendant—a man of dangerous passions—by fine or imprisonment. He must say, though, that it was—yes, he would use the word—disgraceful that an English gentleman, a baronet, could so far forget himself as to get into a state of intoxication and be mixed up with such an affair.

It was only by an effort that Sir Richard, who was fuming and chafing under this exordium, continued to keep silence. He told himself, again and again, that if he had known what was to follow he would never have given Rivière into custody; for, in spite of his anger, he was pleased to find the chivalrous manner in which the little Frenchman avoided all reference to Lady Lawler. He became somewhat calmer, though, upon the magistrate's eloquence being turned on to the defendant, who was also severely admonished about the evils attendant upon the custom of allowing his angry passions to rise. In fact, at one time it seemed as if his worship was about to repeat, for the defendant's behalf, a few verses from the poems

of the celebrated Dr. Watts; but he refrained, and went on preaching in prose, to Rivière's great disgust—the latter folding his arms and gazing full at him, with a look of the most profound contempt pervading every feature, till the last words of the long-winded speech fell upon him like a thunder-clap—

"Be fined five pounds and costs, or a month's imprisonment, without hard labour."

"Five pounds!—a month!" gasped Rivière.

"Yes," said the magistrate; "and then, if you will take my advice, you will at once leave this country, and get back home, where pistols and swords may be more palatable to the people at large than they are here."

This was said jocularly, and his worship looked round for a smile, which was, of course, accorded to him, in company with a little murmuring.

This was, however, immediately suppressed, attention being taken up by the excited gestures of Rivière, who first fell back, and then started forward, clutching wildly at the dock.

"Five pounds—a month!" he exclaimed; "but this is not justice. I could not pay so much. You do favour that man, and oppress—"

"Silence!"

"I will be heard," he exclaimed, rendered almost frantic by his position. "You shall—"

"Are you prepared to pay?" asked a stern voice.

"No, no—I protest—I—"

There was a nod given, and two strong hands were laid upon the defendant's collar. For a moment he thought of resistance; but his good sense warned him of its futility, and he suffered himself to be led quietly away to a cell, the last words he heard upon leaving the court being a call for the next case.

CHAPTER XLII.

AN OFFER.

WHAT should he do—what should he do? He was safe from the plotting of Lemaire here, he told himself, grimly. But was he? There was that poor, defenceless woman, too. She must be protected; but how?

Rivière would have paced his cell, but

there was not room; and he threw himself upon the wooden board, and thought.

Five pounds or a month—five pounds or a month; and he without the means of paying five shillings. He had not a friend to whom he could apply. But was there no appeal? No; there could be no appeal in this case. It was open to him to pay the fine, and then he would be at liberty. But the money?

And the alternative—a month's imprisonment. He might have borne it, as he had borne imprisonment before, but for Marie, and the knowledge that she was pursued by that fiend. He must be free, or he should go mad; and as for that cur, that coward, that miserable wretch, Lawler, he would have a revenge upon him that should embitter his life to the very end.

Yes, he would be revenged upon him; but how? How to get free? Five pounds—such a pitiful, paltry sum; and yet standing up like a huge rock before him to bar the way. While Marie—Heaven! what would she think? It would kill her if she knew. Better perhaps, though, that she should die than live on in such misery; only let her die with faith in him—her husband, to the last.

Yes, it was very bitter. His enemy, a coward, had triumphed because he was rich and respectable, and had money; while the poor refugee—

Would have revenge yet—would strike the coward in his tenderest part; and make him suffer, even as did the victim of his oppression now.

Then he calmed down, and sat and thought systematically as to what should be his course.

First, he decided that he must bear his fate like a man, merely sending to Marie to be upon her guard; telling her, if he were allowed to write, that he was ever her own husband, that he was kept away by friends, and that she was to be cautious and wait patiently for his return.

She must never know, he argued; for she was a poor tender woman, and she would be horror-stricken if she comprehended one-half. She must never know, either, of his determination to be revenged on Sir Richard Lawler.

"Poor girl," he said, and a soft smile spread over his worn face—"she was angry then with her suspicions, but that would soon pass over; and if I were there she would be

ready to ask me to forgive her for her mad rage."

But the next minute maddening thoughts came upon him about how she would be left alone once more to the tender mercies of the world.

"She will be a match for all," he muttered. "Let them touch her if they dare!"

His eyes flashed in the dark, as he stood there in the dim obscurity of the cell, and gazed defiantly about him; till a crushing thought came, so bewildering, so maddening, that after throwing up his clenched hands above his head, he sank down with a groan upon the floor, and crouched there, sobbing and moaning like a beaten child.

"She will think that I have forsaken her—that I have left her for Lady Lawler." She had believed him false when she had read that accursed letter; and now, as he did not return, even if he wrote, she would believe ill of him; for had he not deceived her before?

"But I will be a man," said Rivière, at last; and he sprang up once more. "She would go to Grosvenor-square if she thought that, and there she would learn the truth. Let her; perhaps it would be best."

And now the time began once more to flag heavily; and he sat thoughtful, and wondering whether this was to be his cell, or whether he would be removed, when a policeman came and opened the door.

"Let's see, your name's Rivvyer, aint it?"

"Yes."

"This here's a note for you."

"Ah, Marie! she has learned, then."

"Eh?"

"Who is it from?"

"Oh, from that there gent as you—"

"Take it back, take it back!" exclaimed Rivière; "I do not know him—I do not see him. He is a scoundrel. I will not have to do with him at all."

"There, don't be in a fuss," said the policeman, kindly. "What a fiery little fellow you are. You're for all the world like a chap in a play. Why don't you take it coolly? 'taint the first time you've been in prison, I'll bet."

Rivière started; he was staggered, and the man's words had more influence over him than he could have thought possible.

"Look here," continued the constable, "it's no use to kick against your luck. Here's this gent that you pitched into disposed to come round and be friends; leastwise, it

seemed so from the way he spoke about you."

Rivière looked from the note to the policeman, and back again.

"Did he give you that letter?"

"Yes, wrote it out there, in the inspector's office, and seemed quite cooled down like; so the best thing you can do is to cool down the same, and be friends."

"You do not know what you say," said Rivière, hoarsely; "but let me see—let me read the note. Perhaps," he added to himself, "he will apologize; or," his eyes flashed, "he knows that he was a coward, and will give me satisfaction."

He tore open the note, and, getting close to the door, read, in a great, sprawling hand, written in pencil—

"Give me your word of honour, as a French gentleman, that neither I nor my family shall see or hear from you again, and I will forgive your violence of last night, pay the fine and costs for you, and set you at liberty.—R. L."

Rivière stood motionless, with his eyes fixed on vacancy; and the paper he held between his fingers trembled like a wind-blown leaf: Marie and freedom beckoning to him on one side; a gaoler, misery, and torturing suspense on the other. Those were the two mental pictures upon which Louis Rivière gazed—now leaning towards the one, now drawn to the other.

It was a hard struggle, and well would it have been for all concerned had he been won over to the side of peace and forgiveness. But no: the smart of the blows he had received was too fresh, and the injustice from which he fancied he had suffered still rankled too strongly in his breast. He wavered no longer. What!—give up his idea of revenge, submit tamely and like a cur to this purse-proud Englishman, who would not give him an honourable meeting? No, he would sooner die.

"Well, what's the answer?" said the policeman, who had been watching him curiously.

"That!" said Rivière, proudly, and as he spoke he tore the note in two, and placing the pieces together tore them again. "Give those pieces to Sir Richard Lawler, the English baronet and gentleman, and tell him that that is the poor refugee's answer. Tell him that I look upon him as a coward and a scoundrel, and tell him that a French gentle-

man, however poor, cannot stoop to an act that is mean."

The policeman uttered a low whistle, and the door was closed.

"Well," said Sir Richard, "what did he say?"

"Let out like a madman, sir, and called you all sorts of names. Said I was to give you this."

Sir Richard Lawler muttered an oath as he took the scraps of paper, crushed them in his hand, and thrust them into his pocket.

"He will be cooler when he has had a month in prison," he said to himself. "Cursed unfortunate! I wish I had never seen the miserable little beggar. What will Addy say?"

For another hour after the door closed Rivière was left to his bitter thoughts. Then the daylight once more flashed into his cell, and a couple of officials appeared.

Was he ready to pay the fine and costs?
No.

Then in half an hour he would have to go to the House of Correction.

Good.

The door closed once more.

"He's an old bird, that," said one to the other; "he's been in the cage before—don't mind it a bit."

"The little Frenchman's a-going to take it out, Dick," said the other to a friend in the court soon after.

Then the notice was given over to the clerk. The reporters obtained the scrap of news, feeding their note-books with it greedily; and at the end of the notices, in the morning papers, headed "Disgraceful Assault in High Life," appeared the words—

"The prisoner, not being provided with the necessary amount, was removed in the prison van."

MORE WINE FROM AN OLD BIN (1766).

"WE are informed that the inhabitants of the island discovered by the Dolphin man-of-war, who are about nine feet high, are of a tawny complexion, and clothe themselves with the skins of wild beasts. The children in their mothers' arms measure about four feet in height. One of these infants was decorated with ribbons by some of our people, which so much delighted

the inhabitants that they came down to the sea-shore in great numbers, bringing with them the choicest produce of their country."

"Last Thursday, as two vicious horses were shoeing at a farrier's at Hackney, one of them lolled out his tongue, when the other turned round and bit it quite off. The poor creature was obliged to be knocked on the head, to prevent its going mad."

"Monday last was brought over, in the Britannia Greenlandman, twenty Shetland sheep. They are extremely diminutive—the rams, though full grown, not being taller than a lap-dog."

"A lady of Woodford has been convicted before Dr. Lancaster, one of his Majesty's justices of the peace for the county of Essex, for wearing a chintz calico gown, for which she paid the penalty. The Weavers Company on Thursday last paid £20 to the informer, agreeable to their advertisement."

"An ordinance is just published at Vienna forbidding the use of paint to the ladies. This fashion was become so tyrannical, that even the finest women, not to appear ridiculous, were forced to tarnish by paint the charms with which nature had endowed them."

"We are informed that next Monday almost all the new contracts for fresh butter commence for the ensuing year. They are chiefly made at sixpence a pound till the 10th of November next, and from the 10th of November next till Old May Day following at eightpence. There is one factor in Clare Market has already agreed for upwards of twenty dairies. If this is not monopolising, engrossing, and forestalling the markets, what is? As to the poor, it is impossible that they should ever get at fresh butter at the present price of tenpence a pound; but was fresh butter allowed to be brought to market directly from the dairymen, the poor might buy it, after next Monday, at sixpence halfpenny per pound, the carriers never charging more than one halfpenny per pound for bringing it up to London, they finding cloths and flats to bring it in. Whoever pays more than sevenpence halfpenny a pound for fresh butter after Monday next is most scandalously imposed on."

"Monday, a chimney at Garraway's Coffee-house in Exchequer-alley was blown down; and Mr. Jameson, who formerly kept a china shop in Cornhill, passing by at the same time, was called to from the King's Arms Tavern to acquaint him of the danger he

was in ; and in making haste to avoid it, he tumbled down and broke one of his legs, and some bricks falling upon one of his hands, shattered it in a terrible manner."

"We are told that the clothes made for Count Bothmar, late ambassador from his Danish Majesty to the Court of Great Britain, and now Chamberlain to her Majesty, were all of Spitalfields manufacture, and so elegant in their fabric, and superb in richness, as will be a convincing proof that our manufactures (when properly encouraged) can exceed any nation on earth. One suit cost £175."

"The following accident happened last week at Chipping-hill, in the road between Braintree and Witham. The driver of a loaded broad-wheel waggon being drinking at a public-house, suffered the horses to proceed without him. They unhappily met a young gentleman, who was riding on a hobby before his father. The waggon tore the hobby down, broke his fore feet, and killed him on the spot. The youth was thrown under the waggon, but providentially escaped unhurt."

"Sunday last, in the afternoon, a great number of people were skating on the canal in St. James's Park, when the ice in many places giving way, several people narrowly escaped being drowned. Among the rest, a young woman, very genteelly dressed, having ventured too far on, one of the skaters passing hastily by her, accidentally tripped up her heels, and her weight breaking the ice, she fell in, where she remained up to her shoulders in water, supporting herself by the ice, for the space of five minutes, before any person endeavoured to give her assistance. At last a sailor, encouraged by a prodigious multitude, jumped in to her relief, whose undaunted behaviour animating three or four others, they followed his example, and with great difficulty brought her to shore in a most pitiable condition. She was immediately put into a coach, and carried home to her friends in Long-acre. A collection of several shillings was made by the people present, to reward the sailor for his intrepidity."

"A woman of no inconsiderable consequence was last Wednesday evening handed out of a very elegant company, for mistaking a gold snuff-box, and supposing it to be her own property at the same time, though she knew it belonged to another lady in the company."

"On Tuesday last, a lady, through forgetfulness, left a box of jewels in the front pocket of a postchaise, at Portsmouth; and before she recollected her negligence, they were gone beyond the probability of recovery."

"We are informed that a lady at the West-end of the town lost one night last week, at a sitting, 3,000 guineas at loo."

"In the course of a few days Mr. Quin and Mrs. Cibber have died; Mr. Foote is lying at the point of death, in consequence of the amputation he has sustained in his leg; and an actor, who lately belonged to Covent Garden Theatre, committed an act of suicide this week near Islington."

"James Haxup, a person employed to kill vermin that destroy game, shot at Ulleskelf, near Tadcaster, last week, a large glead, or kite, that measured near two yards between wing end and wing end (which he only broke the wing of), that, with its talons, put out the eyes of a child of nine years old who was along with him, and lamed the said Haxup in both hands, in tearing it from the child."

"Monday, by order of the Lord Mayor, the young girl that was offered for sale at the Royal Exchange, and who was sent to be taken care of at the London Workhouse, was delivered to the care of a lady, who has humanely taken the poor girl into her own family."

"On Wednesday, the 29th of Jan. last, as Mr. Bainbridge, of Bolton, near Lancaster, was attempting to cross the Seven-mile-sands, in a thick fog, he lost his road, and wandered about till the flood tide came in and surrounded him. He killed his horse, galloping backwards and forwards to escape the tide; and was fortunately taken up (after floating on the surface of the water about five hours, seated on the dead horse, motionless and benumbed with cold) by two youths, belonging to the sloop Providence, from Milanthorp, then riding at anchor (since arrived), who towed him with their boat to the side of the vessel, hoisted him with a tackle on board, rolled and rubbed his body, and finding some appearance of life, stripped him, and clothed him with dry clothes, and applied some brandy and water to his mouth, which, with great difficulty, they got down his throat. Life visibly returning, they carried him in their boat to a public-house, where, after putting him in a warm bed, he recovered in a few hours."

"The right rev. the Bishop of B—preached

lately in the City, observed that the Christian religion was, at this time, in a condition not much unlike that of its great Master; for between superstition on one hand, and enthusiasm on the other, it *was crucified between two thieves.*"

"On Friday se'nnight, as a poor man was returning from Wolverhampton to his own house on Wedgfield-heath, a place about two miles from that town, it is thought he was so bewildered in the snow that he fell into a hollow way, where he perished. He was found last Tuesday, and when discovered had one eye picked out, and was otherwise disfigured by the crows. He has left a wife and seven children."

"Some letters from Edinburgh mention the accounts of Mrs. Ogilvie's escape to be as follows:—There were two rooms allotted to her when lying-in (an outer and inner room), in the last of which she was brought to bed; after that happened, the under-keeper, or turnkey, visited her once a day to see she was in bed in the inner room. Some days before she made her escape, she entreated that the door between the two rooms might be left open all night, as she was, or pretended to be, very sick and weak. This, from a principle of humanity, was complied with; and that afternoon the keeper of the prison, or under-keeper, visited her, drew the curtains, and saw her in bed, when she entreated not to be disturbed till next day at noon, as she was very bad. Immediately after this, she got out of bed, dressed herself in man's apparel, and in the dusk came forward through the two to the outer gate, where the turnkey, suspecting no harm, among the others, let her pass unnoticed."

"Last Tuesday morning a cornet in Sir Robert Rich's regiment of dragoons, quartered in Worcester, shot himself through the head with a pistol, while in bed at an inn. The pistol, which he had discharged near his right temple, was found fast held in his hand. The coroner's inquest sat on his body, and brought in their verdict, *Non compos mentis.*"

"Yesterday a poor old pensioner of Chelsea Hospital was inhumanly rode over by a couple of young bloods, in the King's-road. A gentleman, passing that way in his chariot, took him into the carriage, which he ordered to be driven to Hyde Park Infirmary, in order that he should be properly taken care of."

"The bill now depending for new paving

the streets, &c., in London, will take place immediately after it has passed into a law. The pavement is to begin at Temple-bar, and go on to Whitechapel-bars. The tax is to commence from Michaelmas next, and those persons who do not live in the parts where the works are carried on will only be called upon to pay two-thirds of whatever may be allotted them to pay, till such time as the work reaches them. The north side of St. Paul's Churchyard will be open for carriages to pass till such time as the south side is finished."

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER V.

"We figure to ourselves
The thing we like, and then we build it up
As chance will have it."—*Henry Taylor.*

AS the old clock in the hall struck the half-hour, Mrs. Manning, the picture of dignified composure, rose from the easiest of easy chairs, and arrived at the foot of the stairs just in time to see her niece take the last three steps at a flying jump. She presented anything but a calm demeanour. For running a mile in the sun, dressing in fifteen minutes, and scampering downstairs at the imminent risk of breaking your neck, are not exactly the preliminaries conducive to that desirable result.

"Ready to the minute," said she, looking up at her aunt's surprised face.

"I am glad the servants were at the door," whispered Mrs. Manning, as she swept past, to climb, by means of steps built on the sliding-scale principle, into the spacious sarcophagus awaiting them.

As they sat side by side, lisping out commonplaces with unmeaning smiles, the Mrs. Brownsmiths of the world might well exclaim—"The most united pair—have not a thought from each other. It is difficult to know which to admire most, the devotion of the niece or the love of the aunt." And so much for their knowledge "beyond the next milestone." It was true the two loved each other in a way. They never quarrelled or nagged; but that they understood each other was false. The mere fact of living years and years in the same house does not help to the discernment of the character of the inhabitants thereof. Granted, it gives opportunity for studying, yet that opportunity is generally thrown away; for so wedded is the mind to its preconceived convictions, that

unconsciously it construes each action, look, or utterance into support of its own theory. Not until we shake off the eternal egotist, can we fully fathom the depth, the beauty, and the spirit of others' thoughts.

In any worldly point, Mrs. Manning was as a child. Though from her earliest youth accustomed to what is termed society, she had gathered no contamination from its touch, being one of those gentle, "thinketh no evil" kind of people who retain their freshness and beauty to the end. She was the elder of the Hon. John Sackville's two daughters, and inherited all the gentleness of the maternal stock; while to her younger sister fell all the temper of the paternal branch.

Their mother had faded away only a few years after her marriage, and the Hon. John having put up a monument to "her whose loss was deplored by all her sorrowing friends, and by none more than her bereaved husband"—as if feeling the necessity of making a public declaration of a fact cynics might doubt—felt himself a free man once more. Beyond paying a yearly visit to the fashionable lady in whose charge his children were, and strictly insisting on their being brought up in every ladylike art, he saw no more of them for fifteen years.

The result of this education was to render the elder the perfection of all her father could wish; and the younger a reckless beauty, who had taken to herself the demon of opposition, and, moreover, possessed the unhappy knack of always making friends with the wrong people.

Among their chaperone's acquaintance was a Mr. Lane; who, being thoroughly handsome and dissipated, was much sought after by those who seemed to think that touching the apple was the next best thing to nibbling it. To these girls he had been always held up as 'Old Bogie'; consequently, from the nature of the younger, seeing him courted in society, and hearing him privately abused in her presence, this at once raised him to a pinnacle in her estimation that Simon Stylites would have washed to obtain. At this juncture the elderly lady, foreseeing complications, graciously intimated to the Hon. John "that her health deprived her of the pleasure of continuing the charge of his dear daughters any longer." This much disturbed the paternal mind; and finding two grown-up daughters in his house greatly interfere with his own little

pursuits, he at once set about eligibly marrying them. Having accepted the proposals of his old friend Manning, and a certain General with ten lacs of rupees, great was his indignation on finding his youngest-born would neither look at the General nor his rupees.

The Hon. John, having never before known contradiction, flew into a wild passion, and gave her to understand that he never broke his word, a sentiment echoed to the letter by his dutiful daughter, who further informed him that her word was already passed to Mr. Lane; in proof of which, she eloped with him that very night. This episode did not affect her father much, who by either arrangement got rid of her, and that was his primary object.

In later days, though Mr. Lane constantly importuned Mr. and Mrs. Manning for money, his wife made no sign; and it was only the dread fear of her child's future which at last wrung from her deserted death-bed a cry for help. Mrs. Manning, who at the time had been greatly shocked by her sister's conduct, now felt a great longing for her child; but on this point her husband proved inflexible. This was her first sip of the cup of sorrow; for though a tyrant to those about him, he uniformly treated the young girl who had not objected to become his wife with consideration and kindness.

A year or two after Mrs. Lane's death, Mr. Manning, feeling old age gradually chilling him, called his wife into his sanctum sanctorum, and delivered himself of the following speech:—

"When I am gone you will want a companion; therefore, as I hate strangers meddling in family affairs, I have given my lawyers instructions to find out this Lane child, separate her from all her old connections, and put her to a decent school, where she can remain till the gout carries me off; then you may bring her here."

Mrs. Manning's lips quivered with suppressed pleasure.

"I wish also," said he, "to show to the world the great esteem I hold you in, by leaving to you, for the natural term of your life, the whole bulk of my property."

Mrs. Manning, as a daughter, adored her father as the noblest of men; as a wife, revered her husband in the light of an oracle; and as a widow, gave the little love that lay till then dormant in her heart to Agnes Lane. This, she placidly believed,

was sufficient to fill all the chinks in her niece's heart; which heart she hoped in time to transfer into the safe keeping of Mr. Græme.

Some estimable people ladle out their affection in buckets, Mrs. Manning did so in spoonfuls. She did not understand that the heart as well as the tongue is an unruily evil which cannot be controlled. Now, Agnes dealt in chasms not chinks, and required buckets not spoonfuls. She felt a stately kiss every night very cold comfort, as, with elbows on the window-sill and face thrown back, she would gaze out into the black darkness, seeking for ocular demonstration of the night she felt within. There were times when even the dark garret and dismal school-room seemed to possess greater charms than the luxurious monotony of her present life. Was there never to be an end to finding appropriate answers to the men about the last run and the next session, or listening to the senseless jabber of silly women?

My pensive public, have you ever been condemned to sit hour after hour, an idiotic smile distorting your whilome handsome countenance, listening to the same scandal over and over again, until the little interest of hearing what each one adds becomes an effort for your enfeebled mind; and, like the Cheshire cat, nothing but the grin remains? If so, you will sympathize with Agnes Lane's fate. We all have our destiny to fulfil, be it of pleasure or pain, or as thorns in the sides of others. We cannot all say we are here for our own special delight. Some like living for the sake of the good things of this world, others to keep out the next heir, or, it may be, dread of what comes hereafter; but having been all pitchforked, no less volens, into this world, man is not man unless he bid for the best place in the universal scramble.

On Mrs. Manning relapsing into silence, Agnes gave herself up a prey to unhappy thoughts. How ought they to meet under Mrs. Brownsmith's eyes? Would he pretend not to know her? How stupid not to have settled what to do! Then she turned over in her mind a dozen different ways of casually remarking to her aunt that she had accidentally met Captain Nolan. But that would lead to questions of how, when, and where; and she felt disinclined to tell her aunt of her afternoon's three hours' confidential talk with the great unknown. Of course their

first interview would naturally follow, and to breathe that to living soul she felt impossible, when the bare recollection of it sent the blood rushing to her cheeks; so, choosing the golden part, she remained silent.

CHAPTER VI.

"A dinner lubricates business."—*Stowell.*

WHEN Mrs. Manning and Agnes entered the drawing-room of Islington Court, it presented to the eye one gorgeous blaze of glass, gilt frames, chandeliers, and green velvet, amidst which display floated Mrs. Brownsmith, hung in ruby moiré and studded with diamonds. The guests had seemingly all arrived, and comprised the usual amount of wit, beauty, and talent that is general to an ordinary country dinner party.

Agnes's heart sank within her as she took a cursory glance at the intending diners. There was Mr. Græme, the clergyman of the parish, of course, to say grace and take in Mrs. Brownsmith; Miss Wilmot, outwardly a young lady, who never went anywhere without papa—an old deaf gentleman of eighty, given to inquiring affectionately after all your deceased relatives; Mr. Jones, J.P., who spent his days in prosecuting and remanding poachers; Mrs. Jones, who divided her time between Foreign Missions and the Poor Woman's Flannel Petticoat Association; the senior lieutenant of the 200th Light Infantry (now stationed at Muggersford) and his wife—Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald by name—easy-going people, upon whom care sat jauntily; and lastly, a few stray gentlemen from the aforesaid regiment, whose conversation, let it be hoped, was not an index of their prowess in the field.

The only hope of the house, the fair Julia, sat listening in a becoming attitude to the fervid praise bestowed by the youngest sub, Mr. Neville, on the white lilies half hid in her golden hair. Little did that innocent youth dream that the charmer before him had spent the whole of the morning in deciding what flowers she would wear, and the whole of the afternoon in choosing the particular specimens. Mr. Brownsmith, with a great show of shirt frill and studs, stood on the hearth-rug, displaying his best super-fines to the bedizened grate, while ever and anon he talked affably to his compeers on the gentlemen's platform; but, to a close observer, the restlessness of his fingers and nervous twitching of his eyes plainly showed

that his mind was not at rest. At length, taking out his watch and raising himself on the point of his toes, he said, dubiously, coming down with a jerk on his heels—

“Quarter to eight.”

At this moment, Mrs. Brownsmith, who had been buzzing about the room more than usual, addressing her spouse, said, in her loudest and shrillest of tones—

“My love, ring the bell. If we wait any longer for Captain Nolan, the dinner will be spoilt.” Then turning to the company in general—“We *had* hoped to have had the pleasure of introducing our neighbour, Captain Nolan—”

“Of the Royal Horse Artillery, lately returned from India,” put in Mr. Brownsmith; and was immediately frowned down by his better-half, who continued, regardless of the interruption—

“—to our present assemblage of guests; and why he is not here, I cannot imagine,” concluded she, with an amount of asperity her listeners would have pardoned, had they known the pangs of mortification she was then enduring to see all her angling to be the first to catch Captain Nolan and parade him out had failed; and at the last moment, when she felt success almost within her grasp. But, to borrow from her own vocabulary, “she knew she was a Christian woman.” And as Mr. Græme courteously escorted her across the hall, she confided to him that, “like David, she bore these little trials with resignation.”

Agnes found herself seated between an empty chair and an empty head—the former represented the renegade who had not come; the latter was represented by Major Dashwood, whom chance had directed to take her in. He, sublime man! according to his habitual custom, had been in a semi-somnambulant state from the time he entered the house, until the magic word “dinner” awoke him to other things; then, having the dining-room in view, he seized on the nearest lady, who in this case happened to be Agnes, and at once made for the desired haven. With what thankfulness did she mark the gleam of joy that sprang to his eyes as he took up the menu, and scanned it over with fond delight, lingering over the names of his favourite dishes with a pleased yet sad smile, as if feeling the utter impossibility of doing full justice to such an Apician feast.

Agnes was immensely relieved that she

had neither to admire the flowers on the table nor the elegant get-up of the cartes; and being safe from any interruption for the next hour and a half, began wondering what had become of Captain Nolan. Why had he not come? What could have happened? He was not drowned, for she had seen him re-cross the river in safety; he must have caught cold, perhaps was in high fever by this time; he would die and it would be all her fault.

She was just working herself up into a high state of misery, when the spoons of the united assemblage, with the exception of Major Dashwood's, were suspended in their upward flight by the announcement of Captain Nolan. Agnes shot just one glance to see that it was he, not his ghost, and then glued her eyes on the cloth.

Captain Nolan marched up with perfect sang-froid to Mrs. Brownsmith, and taking her hand, which he slightly pressed, said—

“It is impossible for me to tell you how sorry I am to make my appearance at so late an hour, especially as you are the first to welcome me back among my old friends; but I am sure I need make no excuse, when I tell you that it was nothing less than an accident that detained me.”

At the sight of Captain Nolan, Mrs. Brownsmith's face began to relax, and on his getting as far in his speech as “the first to welcome me,” it so beamed with joy as to remain utterly incapable of expressing even a decent show of sympathy for his accident.

“Dear me,” burst from the foot of the table. “Suppose your horse fell—not much hurt, I hope—no bones broken—treacherous animals, horses—very. Will you have some brandy?”

“Thank you, it was nothing—a mere scratch; only worth mentioning as being the cause of my present delay.”

“Glad to hear it, very. Please sit down. Let me introduce you. Mrs. Manning, whom you are sure to remember; Mrs. Jones, Miss Lane, my daughter, Mr. Græme, and some brother officers, whom no doubt you already know, there is such a freemasonry among you soldiers.” (Here the gentlemen of the Line moved uneasily in their chairs.) “My dear, cannot you find a place for Captain Nolan near you?”

The individual addressed, who had been bowing and murmuring “delighted” during his host's rigmarole, now cut in with—red,

"Please do not let me disturb any gentleman. I see an empty chair next Mr. Græme."

Into which, to stifle further argument, he accordingly dropped, giving Agnes's hand—as she put it down to draw away her dress from under his feet—a slight squeeze.

The Brownsmiths had found out that the best passport into good society was the giving of good dinners, so that during the various stages of dinner the conversation was of a very intermittent character; and it was not until a sudden burst of talking, breaking out on the disappearance of the cheese, as if cheering it in the name of all that had gone before, that Captain Nolan considered there was cover sufficient to speak to her on his right.

"Did you get into a row for being late?"

"No. Did you have a bad fall?"

"Tell it not in Gath, that was a polite fiction—only a fall from the truth, instead of the mare."

At this announcement Agnes felt so unaccountably happy that, in dread of showing it, she put on an extra severe face, and said—

"Then it is not true?"

"Do not look so solemn; it is not always advisable to tell the truth. But look at our noble host. What is exciting him?"

Making desperate lunges with his knife at the inoffensive decanters before him, Mr. Brownsmith was saying, in an agitated voice—

"Indeed, sir, you are totally mistaken. It was entirely owing to the stupidity of our attorney at Muggerford, who is a Radical in disguise, that we lost the county."

"Pardon me, there you are under a false impression," said Mr. Peel, in the calm, dogmatic tone of a Liberal who knew not defeat. "The county always has and ever will return a Liberal; besides, you Conservatives have no rising men."

"No rising men? Can you say Lord — and Mr. — have not distinguished themselves in the House?"

"I admit that they can talk; but that will be of little service now your party have found an abler method of expressing their feelings."

"How?"

"By cock-crowing."

as "I deny the imputation," rejoined Mr. Brownsmith, with great warmth. "If such an incident did occur, it came from your

side of the House; but here is a gentleman who will be able to confirm all I say, for he was in London at the time, and of course heard all about it. Mr. Neville, who was the member who crowed?"

Mr. Neville looked up, Mr. Neville looked down, in dire doubt what he should say to please the old gentleman; and began stammering out—

"I did not hear—that is, I do not know, but—(happy thought)—it must have been a Cockney member."

Mrs. Manning, thinking personalities were beginning to run rather high, and knowing Mr. Brownsmith's interest (pecuniary and otherwise) in railways, in order to make a diversion began expatiating on the comfort and rapidity of the N.G.R., wholly forgetting that it and the Via Media were at daggers drawn; and wound up her list of its advantages by asking—

"Did he know that Sir John Levenson had the privilege of stopping the night express at Heathfield?"

This roused the virtuous indignation of Mr. Brownsmith, who answered—

"I should like to know why Sir John Levenson should stop an express more than any one of us. It is an injustice that would not be tolerated on any other line in the kingdom."

"I believe," pleaded Mrs. Manning, "Sir John only uses his privilege when called away on parliamentary business. Then anybody can stop the twelve o'clock express. I remember I used to find it very inconvenient before the N.G.R. was open, travelling in a slow train to London by the Via Media."

"Well, Mrs. Manning, I do not know if they would do it for you, but they will always stop any train at Muggerford for me." This in a complacent voice, from which all anger had disappeared.

At this juncture, Mrs. Brownsmith having nodded mysteriously to Mrs. Manning, as if saying, "Let us go and murder some one," rose; and the fairer portion wended their solitary way to the drawing-room, leaving the nobler section to talk over "the women." No matter what subject is at first started, it always ends in this. I have known her led up to through tortuous paths; but woman is a dead find at last.

The ladies having taken momentary possession of the gentlemen's platform, as if in assertion of their women's rights, and those

with small feet having displayed their rosetted slippers to the coalless fire and envy of less gifted sisters, broke up into two coteries.

Those of the sere and yellow leaf fell at once, tooth and nail, into the great question of servants. Why they always discuss this subject I cannot conceive, for I have never heard them come to any but the one invariable conclusion, viz., "That servants are not what they used to be;" and from facts I have gleaned, we ought to be thankful they are not.

The young ladies, recruited by those who had already passed the gates of youth, plunged with much zeal into the awful vortex of dress. The masculine mind shakes his head at this, and says, "They talk about us." Pardon me, I grant they may think, but they dare not talk, of you. Very seldom do a party of young women mention men, whether from jealousy or cowardice I know not; but instinctively they feel it dangerous ground, best to be avoided. For where three women are together, the majority is always on the man's side. If it is not safe for a man to abuse one of his own kind before women, how much more hazardous is it in her case, where a disparaging remark on one of the opposite sex brings the whole feminine flock screaming about her ears? Then again, whereas he may adore a dozen, she is only supposed to admire one; and this state of affairs necessitates very careful manipulation in a congregation where each fond heart may be beating for the same Admirable Crichton. Now turn we to dress. Dress is a very safe as well as comprehensive subject, and it is wonderful what a variety of sly hits and cutting remarks (which are certain of being received with inward satisfaction, if not with marks of open delight) come under its head, and can be passed on all lady friends.

There was quite a little flutter among the occupiers of the drawing-room as Mr. Græme and Captain Nolan entered it together. Indeed, Paris himself would have found it difficult to decide to which the apple was due. The one, with fine cut features, noble forehead, grizzled locks, typical of the old school; the other quite the modern type, being one of those indescribable persons only known as "a deuced handsome fellow."

Mr. Græme came up at once to Agnes, and proposed showing her some photographs; while Captain Nolan tried to make conver-

sation for himself and Miss Brownsmith. She was certainly very pretty, and it is never disagreeable to look at a pretty woman; but you must talk as well as stare, and this he seemed to find very difficult. He would have nothing to do with the weather; so, failing that, it was with a certain degree of shame that he fell back on the flowers.

"It is quite refreshing to see water lilies again. They give one an idea of coolness, which is delightful after having been half burnt up in India."

She, not feeling sure of the latter part of his remark, gave him a bewitching smile by way of answer.

"Hang it!" thought he, "I must try again." So he said, with a slight show of anxiety in his voice—

"I cannot have made a mistake; they are real flowers?"

"Oh, yes! Mr. Neville says he would walk ten miles to see such beauties."

"I would walk twenty to see them set in their present golden frame."

Another smile, and the head kept on one side for better inspection.

"Do you like flowers?"

"Well, ah!" stroking his moustache, "I do not care much about them in the garden; but when worn with taste they appear charming."

LOOKING AHEAD.

AS a rule, men have a most intense objection to perform that duty known as making a will. It is not that they are selfish, or mind leaving so much to so-and-so, and this house to Smith, that field to Brown, and that piece of plate to Robinson—in fact, they talk about doing these things openly and without reserve; but to put it in writing, to have a solemn interview with the lawyer, and get it all done in a hard, matter-of-fact way, is to most minds distasteful, for it savours so strongly of the latter end. It is not a pleasant subject, certainly, that consideration of the end, whatever the consolations of religion may effect. We complain of hard life, and call this "a vale of tears;" say that we have been martyrs, and would gladly be at rest; but after all, the fact will declare itself that this globe is a very beautiful world, and that of the evils it possesses and the ills which affect us, a large proportion are of our own making.

Anyhow, let the world be good, bad, or indifferent, the end must be thought of in a quiet, hard, businesslike manner, not only with respect to our will, but our deed. For there are many, many thousands among us who make very little or absolutely no provision for the future, albeit we are blessed, thank goodness, with wives and large families. Insurance offices are all around us, offering great advantages; but we either put off or decline to notice the arrangements which we could make by the payment of a small annual sum. And in a great measure the reason is this, that, like the will-making, we have a distaste for the subject—we don't like to think of the end.

"Oh, yes," we say, "it's all very well, and it is of course every man's duty to provide for his 'weans,' and I shall do it some day; but I'm not going to die yet."

And so the matter gets put off and off, until, it may be, it is too late.

As an able writer says, our houses, with their furniture, which the chances are will never be burned, are carefully insured year after year; while our lives, which we know to a certainty must sooner or later terminate, we neglect, leaving at the end our little ones to the cold mercies of the world. Men toil, work, slave—nay, almost sin for their families, it has been said; they do everything but insure. And this, too, when insurance is so easy, so brought within the reach of us all. For instance, here is an office, the British Provident, which not only gives all the facilities of the others, but has what is so valuable in a crowd, a special feature of its own, established first for the benefit of the members of the medical profession, now for the general public; and this feature is compensation during sickness, combined with life assurance. This is a step in the right direction; for there is no class of men deserving of more thanks and kindness for their labours than that of the medical profession, and as a rule no class receives less.

It is, however, astonishing what an immunity the doctors enjoy from sickness, and often sets the thoughtful wondering about the true theory of infection. Of course, the medical man's knowledge goes a long way towards acting as a safeguard; but, after all, it seems that the calm indifference to danger, the freedom from dread of disease, has the most to do with it, and goes to prove that

where the brave man can walk unharmed, the nervous and shrinking will fall. This is, perhaps, why our insurance offices do not classify the doctors as they would farm buildings and wooden factories—extra hazardous.

But, speaking of hazardous, what a gauntlet of dangers does poor suffering humanity run, and how needful it is to make a provision for those who are dependent upon the bread-winner of the family! There is no need for speculation on probabilities, for the Registrar-General has it all down—reduced to mournful numbers—that 23 persons out of every thousand die in England each year. Here are some of his statistics. Of persons aged 20, 8 out of every thousand die each year; 10 of persons aged 30, 13 of persons aged 40, 16 of persons aged 50, and 31 of persons aged 60. As to those who die of diseases, &c.—46,000 odd die of bronchitis every year, 32,000 of scarlet fever, 930 from accidents connected with the railway, 272 by injuries from animals, 1,136 by injuries from horse conveyances, 78 by agricultural machinery accidents, 112 from sunstroke, 19 by lightning, 37 by sliding and skating, 164 are drowned while bathing, 131 from exposure to cold, 60 from suffocation by food, &c., and upwards of 1,000 by suicide. A fearful total this, indeed!

There is another particular feature, too, in the British Provident which it may be as well to mention. How often, when a man has been well assured, have his widow and children been deprived of that which should have been their support, by the fact that the husband or father has, in some fit of derangement, put an end to his existence—passing from them to the suicide's grave. As a rule, we believe this, by a hard reading of law, has been made a sufficient cause for forfeiture of all claims upon the association in which the dead man has been assured; and when by the above figures we see how large a number perish annually in this way, it is easy to conceive the amount of suffering that this rule entails. In the British Provident, however, the validity of the policies is not affected by this tragic termination of the assurer's life. The association, too, make other concessions, such as service in the United Kingdom in the Militia, Yeomanry, Volunteers, and Royal Navy and Army Reserve; and men of peace have a very broad space given them upon the globe where they may dwell, including the whole

of Europe and the greater part of our colonial possessions.

So much has been said upon the benefits of life assurance and its genuine unselfishness, and so thoroughly is it granted by all men of sense that it is their duty to assure, that the wonder is that every marrying man, and every father of a family, has not taken a step that gives to him a greater peace of mind than he can imagine. And yet how many thousands upon thousands there are who put it off, and put it off, year after year, until it is too late. The general excuse is, "I can't afford it at present." It is not too much to say in reply, "You never will be able to afford it." At all events, the feeling that we can really afford a thing never comes. The real plan is to begin at once by driving in the thin edge of the wedge—assurance for a small sum, and at once. The rest will come; for it is seldom that the man who commences fails to increase his policy, till it represents a respectable sum, a sum that is really assured to his survivors; for as Professor De Morgan has said, "there is nothing in the commercial world which approaches, even remotely, the security of a well-established life office."

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XLIII.

AS the carriage left the vicarage gates, the heiress remarked to her companion, in her ordinary tone of voice, that it was a beautiful day; and immediately tapping Robert on the shoulder, asked if he had heard what she said.

"I don't think I am deaf," replied that young gentleman, saucily, and without looking round. "You said it was a lovely day, and so it is."

"Yes; it really puts me in mind of old times. The hawthorn smells just like the wattles at Tara. Dear old Tara! how happy I used to be there!"

Then she sighed, and leaning slightly forward, asked Robert, who sat before her, if he had heard what she said then; for she had spoken in a much lower tone than before.

"No," he replied, turning round to look at her. "What was it you said?"

"Nothing," returned Miss Middleton.

"Mind your driving, sir, if you don't want to overturn us. You grazed that milestone; pray be more careful."

She then began to talk in a low voice to Louisa, whom she succeeded in convincing that she was loved by Robert M'Lachlan, and prepared for the declaration he was to make as soon as possible after their return to Ardmore.

When they had taken off their things, and were all seated in the drawing-room, an awkward silence ensued; and it was a relief to all three when the housekeeper made her appearance, and summoned the mistress of the house away upon some pretext.

Louisa blushed vividly when she was thus left tête-à-tête with Robert, for she knew perfectly what was to be the next step in the proceedings.

Miss St. Clair was looking particularly well that afternoon; for Miss Middleton's maid's artistic fingers had arranged her coiffure, and the white muslin in which she was simply arrayed became her much better than any other style of dress, especially the faded finery in which her mother took delight.

There may have been a soupçon of pearl powder on her cheeks and throat; but Robert, who ought to know, declares there was not; so perhaps it was the novelty of her position that had the effect of toning down her usually vivid complexion.

As soon as Miss Middleton had left the room with the housekeeper, Robert crossed over and took the seat which she had vacated on the ottoman, where she had been sitting with Louisa. He then stooped forward, so as to obtain a three-quarters view of that young lady's face, and said—

"I hope, Louisa, you will not be angry with me if I repeat what I said to you a short time since at your own house?"

"Do you speak of your own accord this time, or at Miss Middleton's bidding?"

"Of my own accord; but not without her knowledge."

"By her prompting, I have no doubt."

"No, Louisa, upon my word, no; and I beg your pardon for my conduct on the last occasion. I truly and sincerely love you now, and—and—"

"Will break your heart if I should refuse you?" she inquired, archly, and looking up for a moment into her lover's handsome face.

Robert gathered courage—if, indeed, he

stood in need of any more of that commodity than he already possessed—and said—

"I think it is very probable; but you will not be so cruel. Say you will be my wife?"

No answer.

"Will you not give me an answer, Louisa? I love you as sincerely as it is possible to love, and there is nothing I desire more than to call you wife."

"What guarantee have I," demanded Miss St. Clair, "that you will not change your mind again, Robert?"

"Dearest," he replied, "I never changed my mind, for I never knew it till within the last few weeks. Will you not answer me, yes or no?"

"Yes."

It was spoken in a low but distinct voice, perfectly audible to a lover's ears.

There was no misunderstanding between them after that; and when Miss Middleton returned in about half an hour, she saw at a glance how matters stood, and expressed her unbounded satisfaction as she heartily congratulated them both.

"Do you know, Mary," presently remarked Miss St. Clair, confidentially, to the heiress, "that I refused to be your step-mother this morning?"

"You did?" exclaimed Miss Middleton; but she was far too wise to give utterance to all her thoughts upon the subject. All was well that ended well; but she had come very near being too late, she thought—and perhaps she had.

"You must give up the army, Bob," observed the heiress, later in the evening. "It would never do for you to drag your wife about wherever the authorities at the Horse Guards chose to send you."

"What else can I do? The governor is not in a position at present to do anything for me."

"But I am, Bob."

"You!"

"Yes, I, my friend; and I will. And mind, Louisa," she said, turning to the bride elect, "I am to be one of the bridesmaids, dear."

"It is too soon to begin talking about that," said Louisa, blushing.

"No, dear—I hate long engagements. You must be married as soon as Robert has settled his affairs. What would you like to do, Bob?"

"In what way?"

"Well, would you like to settle in Ireland,

or in England, or go out to Melbourne? Papa has first-rate interest there, and could get you almost anything you liked to ask for."

"I cannot really say how grateful—"

"Nonsense, Bob!—none of that, if you please; but say what you would like, and, if at all within reasonable bounds, it shall be done. Would you like to settle yourself in Dublin, or here?—but no, not here, I was forgetting Cochrane."

"If I had my choice," replied Robert, "I would prefer London to any other place."

"Very well, look out for the best practice for sale there; and I will buy it for you, and furnish your house, and give you what will keep you going until your own money comes in. You see, I was Doctor Middleton's daughter before I became an heiress, and know all about it."

"Mary, I could not, I really could not; I should be overwhelmed by a sense of obligation weighty enough to sink a seventy-four."

"Stuff, Robert! I am making no sacrifice for you; on the contrary, if you knew but all, the obligation is entirely on my side."

"If you would let Robert take it as a loan—"

"Don't interfere, Louisa, if you please!" exclaimed the heiress; "I am not a pawn-broker to make advances and cripple the poor fellow for the remainder of his days. Whatever I do shall be done once and for ever. I hope you don't imagine I can't afford it?"

"Oh, no."

"Very well; then that is settled. How much would a first-class practice, with partnership introduction—remember, for at least twelve months—cost you in London?"

"I really scarcely know," replied Robert; "possibly a couple of thousand pounds."

"Not more? In Melbourne it would be at least ten. Very well, two thousand. Say fifteen hundred or two thousand more for furniture, carriage, horses, and so on; that would leave another thousand or fifteen hundred for incidentals, wedding tour, et cetera. Altogether, five thousand—say guineas, a mere bagatelle!"

Of course, the newly affianced couple were profuse in their acknowledgments, which Miss Middleton declined to listen to, averring that the obligation was entirely on her side—which was, in a sense, quite true.

"What will papa and mamma say?" was Louisa's next inquiry.

"Leave them to me, dear," replied Miss Middleton; "I'll undertake to make them give their consent. Make your minds quite easy on that score. Now, good night, Bob, or your brother and sister will think you are lost. You can come over to breakfast in the morning at nine, if you like; and you may as well drive Louisa and me back to the vicarage to-morrow afternoon, and then you must go straight up to Dublin and get your affairs settled as speedily as may be. I shall pay the five thousand guineas for you into La Touche's to-morrow or next day. Good night."

CHAPTER XLIV.

A NUMEROUSLY and influentially signed requisition had been presented to Sir John, requesting him to allow himself to be put in nomination for the county; to which he had agreed on condition of his being permitted to enter Parliament unfettered. He was not a party man, he said; and whichever side brought forward measures most calculated to benefit his native country, to that side he would give his support, whether Whig or Tory, Conservative or Radical; but he would give no pledge nor make any promise.

The deputation thereupon begged for time to reconsider their position, a request to which the baronet readily acceded. He would not bind himself, nor did he wish to hamper them in their choice.

The result may be briefly stated. The requisition was next day definitely withdrawn; and, at a large public meeting held in the town hall at Pennyletter, a unanimous vote of confidence was passed in the sitting members, Messrs. Douglas and Black; and Sir John Middleton, of Ardmore, baronet, finally thrown overboard.

Mr. Dobbie, however, was in nowise discouraged. Highshire sent five representatives to Parliament—two for the county, two for the borough of Pennyletter, and one for the town of Dumfernaghalee; and upon the latter the agent finally fixed his choice.

The baronet himself took but very little interest in the matter; but having promised Mr. Dobbie that he would come forward if requested to do so, he permitted that gentleman to act for him as he thought fit, and the agent was not slow to avail himself of the permission.

The member for Dumfernaghalee was a good-natured lawyer from Dublin, who had sought parliamentary honours with the hope of being attorney or solicitor-general some day; but, finding his hopes in that respect as far from realisation as ever, after ten years of waiting, he, after a confidential interview with Mr. Dobbie, wrote to his constituents regretting his inability to represent them any longer; whereupon the farmers and shopkeepers, as one man, invited Sir John to take his place.

The baronet undoubtedly possessed many claims to their support. He had found the former tenants at will, and had promised them leases—would have granted them at once had not his agent interposed, and prevailed upon him to postpone his intention until after the election.

"For you know, Sir John," he had artfully observed, "if you were to give them leases now, and they voted for you, folk would be sure to say you had done it to bribe them, and there would be no end of trouble about it, and scandal."

And so the promised boon was deferred to a more convenient season.

The townspeople, too, had much cause to be grateful to Sir John; for the hovels in which the Dumfernaghalee labourers had been huddled together were being fast superseded by neat four-roomed cottages, with comfortable back premises attached, where the tenants could keep a pig and fowls without endangering their own and neighbours' health.

In many other respects, too, Sir John Middleton had deserved well of the electors of Dumfernaghalee; and little or no doubt was entertained of his success.

Those among the farmers, even, who did not sympathise with the baronet's views, when the time came, voted to a man against poor Mr. Twaddell, who was the opposing candidate—or rather, for his opponent; for the agent had hinted, quietly and in private, to each of them that of course Sir John could not be expected to grant a lease to any one who went against him at the election; and what could the farmers do?

Miss Middleton evinced a good deal of interest in the proceedings, even to making a persevering canvass for her father from house to house; but, duly warned by Mr. Dobbie, she said little or nothing beyond requesting the electors, as a personal favour, to vote for Sir John; and as Irishmen, whether of

Celtic or Saxon origin, are proverbially polite, she met with a friendly reception in every instance—even from the half-dozen independent citizens who supported Mr. Twaddell.

Two polling places had been appointed, one in Dumfernaghalee Court-house, and the other in the sister village of Moighrath; but there was, contrary to all precedent, no riot, and but very little excitement.

The sitting members for the county and for Pennyletter were returned unopposed; and altogether, "within the memory of the oldest inhabitant," no election had ever passed off in Highshire after so quiet, not to say tame, a fashion.

When the result of the polling was made known, Sir John very briefly returned his thanks to the assembled crowd from the window of our Palais de Justice, but carefully abstained from any religious or political allusion. Mr. Twaddell, on the contrary, made a violent speech, to which he found few to listen, but which was copiously reported in the Pennyletter "*Loyalist*," and on the following day the whole affair was well-nigh forgotten.

It was quite without parallel that the services of the police should not have been required, and stranger still that but two inebriates were next day brought up before the bench, to be discharged with a caution.

But there was rioting and worse, enough to satisfy the most shillelagh-loving Paddy from the south, looming darkly in the distance, and at no great distance either—but we must not anticipate.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE Sunday preceding the discovery of poor Mrs. Woodward's body was a day long to be remembered in the annals of our quiet neighbourhood; and, I need scarcely say, had been looked forward to with very mixed feelings for a length of time by the inhabitants.

The rival chapels, built and partly endowed by the liberality of Sir John Middleton, were to be opened for public worship; and much satisfaction, as well as great indignation, was thereby caused in the town.

Mr. St. Clair, however, looked upon the circumstance with calm indifference.

"It was a pity," he said; "but he was not the man to kick against established facts, especially when, by so doing, he could hurt no one but himself. The mischief was

done; be it his part, therefore, to counteract it as much as possible."

Charles Woodward, our reverend if not revered rector, was speechlessly indignant; but when the effect of the first shock had somewhat passed away, he gave vent to his feelings after a manner characteristic of the man. In fact, he so far forgot himself, and the part of a Christian minister which he had assumed, that several who heard him felt compelled to leave the church, never to re-enter it.

When the long-looked-for day of the opening arrived, it was as fine and bright as could have been desired.

Two ministers of our body attended from Pennyletter. Sir John Middleton and his daughter, Mr. Dobbie and his wife, were present; and the baronet took a prominent part in the prayer meeting which terminated the services of the day; when an interruption, as unlooked-for as it was unseemly, took place, causing much confusion, and still further exciting the ill-feeling that already existed in the town and neighbourhood against the offenders.

The Catholic chapel was formally opened on the same day as ours by their bishop, when a great gathering took place of all the Romanists within several miles; so that the building, which was not a large one, could not accommodate all who sought admission inside its walls.

Had that been all, no great harm had been done. The bishop conducted the morning services in an ordinary and appropriate manner, as I was informed, and left for Bantown at their conclusion; but, in the afternoon, the ex-ambassador from Rome performed the service called vespers, and at its close harangued his congregation in terms more forcible than select; and as most of his hearers had during the interval been refreshing themselves, perhaps too freely, at the Middleton Arms, it was no wonder that the interruption to our prayer meeting, to which I have already alluded, took place.

It is well known what an excitable being is the Irish Celt; and it will, therefore, be no subject for wonder that, after listening to Mr. O'Rafferty's harangue, and imbibing freely at the Middleton Arms, his hearers should have worked themselves into a state of frenzy, and thrown stones through the inoffensive windows of our chapel, when several persons were injured, some of them

seriously, and amongst others Miss Middleton, who received a blow on the side of her head so severe as to render her insensible for several minutes.

Human nature is human nature, all the world over, and will be to the end of time; consequently, it was not to be expected that such an outrage would be suffered to go unpunished. Of course, our people ought not to have taken the law into their own hands; but, unfortunately, they did, and some of the Catholic chapel's windows were also broken; whereupon a regular stand-up fight ensued between the opposing factions in the street, which it required the prompt and energetic action of the police to quell.

During the following week the fire smouldered, but no breach of the peace occurred; for there were, at most, six resident Catholics in the township, and these were extremely inoffensive, quiet persons; but on the ensuing Sunday the quarrel broke out afresh, and stones were freely interchanged between the church and chapel-goers and the adherents of the mass; so that the police had hard work to quiet the belligerents, and patch up a delusive truce.

Mr. O'Rafferty, indeed, was reported to have been more cautious in his language than on the previous occasion, possibly owing to the presence of one of the constables in the chapel; but, unfortunately, the rector gave vent to his indignation in a most intemperate discourse.

The rector's lecture—it could not be called a sermon—was faithfully reported to me, and I took upon myself to remonstrate with him upon the glaring impropriety of his conduct.

He took my admonition in very good part; and when I had finished all I had to say on the subject, replied—

"It is all very well for you to talk, Tom; but are you aware of all they have done?"

"I am; but I cannot see how your intemperate language is to make them better."

"They nearly killed her," he said, in a low voice, while the fire of indignation flashed from his deep-set eyes.

I comprehended the vehemence of his anger then—no doubt I was very stupid not to have guessed at its cause before.

"You mistake, Charles," I replied. "It was a severe blow, no doubt; but it was not intended for any person in particular."

"Don't tell me that—I am perfectly certain some miscreant aimed purposely at her: must have done."

"No, no."

"But I say yes, yes; and she thinks so, too."

I opened my eyes. It was rather soon, I thought, after the burial of his wife, for the rector to begin visiting at Ardmore; and I said so.

"Pooh!" he replied. "I knew her long before I ever saw the other."

"I dare say; but decency, my friend, respect for the memory of—"

"A madwoman," he interrupted. "Don't, Tom—I won't hear you. It was quite accidental."

"What was?" I asked. "The blow?"

"No. I heard she had been nearly killed, and the thought almost took away my reason; so I rode over to the castle, and asked to see her. She came down at once, looking paler than ever I had known her look before—but so lovely, that I came very near falling down on my knees to worship her."

"As you did once before."

"As I did once before," he assented, apparently unconscious of my covert sarcasm. "But I restrained myself," he went on—"though the touch of her hand went through me like an electric shock, and set every nerve in my body tingling; but I recollected my position as a clergyman and a widower, and restrained myself."

"I am glad you had so much sense, Charles."

"I asked her," he continued, "in as indifferent a voice as I could command, how she felt; was she much hurt; did she know who had done it, and so on; and she answered me quite calmly, and without the slightest shade of embarrassment. We talked about different things for a long time, and at last she said—"

"Do you ever long to go back to Australia?"

"No," I replied. "Why should I? I have no cause to love that country, and I do not."

"Why?"

"Because it was for me nothing but a land of disappointment. I wish I had never seen it."

"Do you?" she asked, in evident surprise. "Why?"

"For various reasons, but chiefly be-

cause my peace of mind was there, utterly and for ever, wrecked.'

"'Whose fault was that?'

"'Not mine.'

"'Yes, it was,' she replied—'your own fault: at least, the fault of your hasty temper and wilful blindness.'

"'Pray pardon me, Mary,' I said. 'I believe—nay, I am sure—I was mad, and did not know what I was doing.'

"'Why not?'

"'Because I loved you so deeply, so fervently, that—that—'

"'You lost your reason, and have not yet recovered it, I think.'

"'Pardon me.'

"'It is no matter,' she went on to say. 'When we have taken leave of each other now, we meet no more. Good-bye.'

"'We must not part like this, Mary.'

"'Why not?'

"'Unless, that is, the reports I have heard are true.'

"'More reports! What are they?'

"'You will be angry with me, perhaps, if I repeat them.'

"'What matter?'

"'Too much; but I will not aggravate my fault by believing them.'

"'I will, then, tell you myself,' she said, with flashing eyes. 'You have heard that I was going to be married. Is it not so?'

"'Yes.'

"'You supposed I was going to marry that boy!'

"'Mrs. Cochrane's brother.'

"'Absurd!' she exclaimed, as she once more held out her hand to me, and in her usual sweet tone of voice said—

"'Good-bye, Mr. Woodward. You and I are too old friends—acquaintances, I mean—to part in enmity. Good-bye.'

"'Why part at all?' I asked, gathering courage from the change in her manner, and obtaining at last a glimpse of light. 'Why part at all, Mary?'

"She sighed; and full light breaking in on my too long-darkened mind, I exclaimed—

"'You love me! Say—say you do, for I worship you, I adore you, and have done so ever since the first moment I saw you in the doctor's parlour in Collins-street.'

"I took her hand," continued the rector, "and gazed rapturously into her face.

"'Mary—Mary!' was all I could say."

"So you are engaged, Charles," I asked, "in less than a fortnight after the interment of your wife?"

"It is even so."

"I blush for you."

"Thank you," he said, quietly. "I must confess I cannot do so for myself. But we are not to be married before the year is out."

"You have even arranged that?"

"Yes; but our engagement is to be kept a secret for some time. Of course I may reckon upon your discretion, Tom?"

"Certainly," I replied.

"Very good. Do you wonder now why I pitched into those fellows last Sunday?"

"No," I replied; "your indignation was certainly justified, but not your intemperate language, which could neither alter the past nor smooth over matters for the future."

"Stop," exclaimed the rector; "preaching is my trade, and I never permit any infringement on my rights—in my presence, at least."

I have often blamed myself for not speaking to my friend—as I must still call him—with more freedom than I did; but how few of us there are who do always what we ought to do!

"I shall give up this living," continued the rector, "as soon as we are married—when we intend to go abroad for some time, or perhaps to Australia. In the meantime, I may depend upon your discretion, I suppose?"

"You may."

I never spoke of the engagement between the rector and the ex-doctor's daughter, not even to my wife, until it had become the talk of the whole country side. How it oozed out I cannot imagine.

TABLE TALK.

IT is rumoured that St. Paul's Cathedral is to be furnished with a carillon after the fashion of those grand peals of bells which make musical the spires of the great Low Country cathedrals. The bells are to be from Louvain, and the machinery from Croydon; and the player will sit at a keyboard, and play bell music that shall peal over the city. But will not this be labour in vain? No carillon will sound plain and clear over the roar of London's streets by day; and as to the night, the city is so deserted that there will be few to hear.

AS A YANKEE friend says, "If that don't open his eyes, nothing will." He alluded to the King of Ashantee, who is not only to be invaded with a few of Aveling and Porter's steam traction engines, but also with a railway to be laid down towards his capital, with its accompanying locomotive. If it could be so arranged that his sable Majesty's army were at the terminus, and we could give him something in the style of the Wigan accident, it is probable that his nerves would be sufficiently affected to make our troops a needless encumbrance.

ONE HAS a liking for strange advertisements. Here is a little stranger, born in the columns of the *Daily News*:

MATCH AGAINST TIME, for £2,000 a side. Hughes's Gallery, Stockwell-green. At eight p.m., amidst all his 374 works, lighted al giorno, Nathan Hughes, "the English Prince of Painters," times his pictures, and repeats his challenge (already open thirteen years) to all Nations, to paint best in the time of the great Masters. The Italian Artists say, "E el gran diavolo di tutti i pittore."

The "English prince" and the Italian something else: rather different titles, by the way.

SEEING THAT the solution has been given of the automaton mystery at the Crystal Palace, it is time that they had a fresh novelty to puzzle the ingenious. Here it is, ready to hand, advertised in Michaelmas Day's *Echo*. We give it verbatim, merely omitting name and address, which must be sought for by those who want:—

OIL PAINTING.—Copying wanted, by a well-trained brush; small remuneration.

This must be a wonder—this well-trained brush; but does it go by steam or water power? Of course not the latter; for it must be by oil. No wonder we have so many copies and so few originals, when we have such monsters as this in the market.

HERE IS ANOTHER advertisement issued the same day. Some people might think it rather obscure; but it evidently has a meaning:—

FOLLOWED; black Retriever; can be had paying expenses.—The Lamb, 212, Wick-road, South Hackney; 7 days or sold.

One would like to know, though, whether it was a retriever that followed the lamb, or the lamb the retriever; and how either can be had paying expenses. Have the seven days mentioned anything to do with the House

of Correction; or has the sold any relation to what is called a sell? We give it up.

AT THE PRESENT time in London there is a notice exhibited to people in search of situations:—"Signalmen wanted. No previous knowledge required." Somehow, it is impossible to avoid thinking of the awful catalogue of accidents we have lately had, upon reading such an advertisement as this.

APROPOS OF railway accidents, some one proposes that the engine drivers should have the power of instantly disconnecting an engine from the train; so that, in the case of an obstruction ahead, the driver may detach his engine, put on full speed, and, turning self and stoker into a forlorn hope, dash on into the obstruction, either to clear it away, or to bear the brunt of a collision. It sounds very well at first; but how about depriving the train of the enormous break power the engine possesses? The carriages would probably follow just as certainly to their fate, and the plan seems to savour of asking the captain of a vessel to jump overboard for the benefit of his passengers and crew. Engine drivers will be asking for a rise.

THEY SAY THERE are wheels within wheels, and certainly it is so in roguery. Counterfeit coins are made in pretty good numbers, in spite of the care of the police. But not content with defrauding by the utterance of the base coin, the rogues steal the metal of which they are made—the publicans' pewter pots being requisitioned for the purpose, as proved lately in one of the police-courts. Rather hard on the publicans, who might find themselves in this predicament: a scoundrel might come in, order a pint of beer, pay for it with a counterfeit coin made out of a previous pot, and then steal the present one to make more.

IT SEEMS THAT the Norwegian fishermen take a telescope out with them to sea, and this they use to look down into the water for fish ere they cast their nets. Will not one of our opticians contrive something of the kind for Thames anglers, and save them those many hours of waiting—fishing, as they too often are, without a fish within hail?

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, from by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

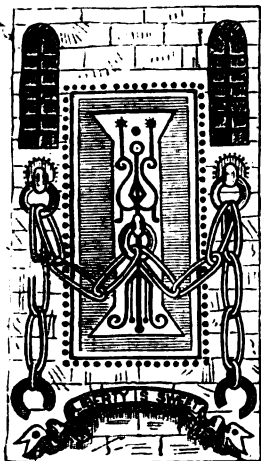
No. 305.

November 1, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XLIII.
SYMPTOMS.



T was a very observant policeman who was on duty in Grosvenor-square, and he took a great deal of notice of what went on at the different houses. He could have told you the names of all the inhabitants, and

when they went out to dinner, and when they stayed at home; when they had company, and when they spent the evening at the Opera. The servants, too, came largely under his observation; and perhaps he knew more of the area business than he did of that appertaining to the front door. His name was Wilkins—P.C. Wilkins, and he had a grievance. Smith had been made a sergeant, and Tompkins had now been promoted to Smith's post, while Smith was a full-blown inspector. It was very bad, very; for he, P.C. Wilkins, was R.C. Wilkins still.

He was on day duty now, for a change, was P.C. Wilkins; and as he slowly walked by the house of Sir Richard Lawler, he beat his gloves together, and thought over the assault case, and wondered whether the barmec would tip him.

"If I ought to," mused P.C. Wilkins. "Well, that little Frenchman would have torn

him like a tarrier if I hadn't come up. But there, what gratitude is there in this world? Here have I done more for our division than any man in the force, and what's my reward?—here am I only a P.C., and everybody else is made sergeants and inspectors."

Now, this was a slight exaggeration caused by acidity of temperament. P.C. Wilkins was not in a good temper. He had reckoned, after being up as witness at the court on the Lawler-Rivière case, upon getting an off evening; but a brother constable had had his hat knocked off in a public-house row, and an excited Irishman had applied to his bare head a pewter quart pot with more vigour than had been necessary—the result being that the Irishman had gone to prison, and the constable to bed; while P.C. Wilkins was on the injured brother's beat.

"What's up there now?" muttered P.C. Wilkins. "That's another little Frenchman hanging about there, smoking his bits of screwed-up tobacco, or I'm a Dutchman. What's his little game?"

P.C. Wilkins kept his eye on the stranger, and passed him.

"Another little Frenchman it is," he muttered, "and there's another assault case on. P.C. Wilkins, my lad, you'll be Sergeant Wilkins yet, if you play your cards right."

He walked up and he walked down, to make sure; and he made sure in his own mind that the stranger was watching Sir Richard's house, though apparently he was idling about to smoke a cigarette in the cool of the evening.

"Now, I wonder whether Sir Richard's in or out?" said P.C. Wilkins; "anyhow, I won't go far away. Who's him? Oh, that theatrical chap as goes after the nuss."

This remark was made as Abram Higgs slowly slouched up to the area gate, opened it as if he had done so a great many times before, and then slouched down.

"Nice time he has on it!" muttered P.C. Wilkins; "good supper, and as much as he likes to drink. Good ale they have down there, too, I'm told. What's this?"

He took a few rapid strides along the pavement; for, as a carriage approached, he saw the strange Frenchman suddenly start, and come to meet it. But he walked slowly by, as if uninterested on seeing who got out; and then, for the first time noticing the policeman, he carefully drew from one of his side pockets a tiny white poodle pup, with a blue ribbon round its neck, and began to smooth and stroke it, holding it up to some ladies who were passing, as if offering it for sale.

"Won't do, my knowing one," said P.C. Wilkins to himself. "You're a dog fancier, are you; and you want to sell that there dog? But it won't do. It might blind a French policeman, but it won't do, my French cock robin; and I shall put salt on your tail, as sure as a gun! You're about as much like a dog fancier, you are, as I am; and you've got some little game on, that's what you've got, and I'm about the man as'll find you out."

But P.C. Wilkins did not make much progress that day. It was a doctor's carriage that drove up; and after a time he saw the doctor come out and cross the pavement, going as delicately as did King Agag of old. Then the carriage drove off, the Frenchman smoked more cigarettes and fondled his dog, P.C. Wilkins seemed to be busy watching a crossing-sweeper at the corner, carriages passed, footmen came out to cool themselves on the doorsteps of the different houses and ornament the posts, the lamps were lit, the stars looked down on the great square, and nothing happened.

But there was a little more movement inside Sir Richard Lawler's house; for her ladyship had had a desperate quarrel with her lord—so it was said down in the servants' hall. Jane gave her version on the top of James's, contradicting a good deal of what he had said; but announcing that when she took young master into the dining-room at dessert time, her ladyship had got red eyes, and told her to take the child away. Then the little fellow had wanted to go to his papa, and get some fruit; but he had ordered her off.

"In the vishusest way as never was," said Jane, smoothing down her apron.

The next minute Jane had, like the rest,

been startled by a cry from upstairs, and the news soon spread that her ladyship was in violent hysterics, and that the groom had gone in a cab from the mews behind to fetch Sir Brandon Cure.

Of course this was the signal for a long canvass of the Rivière fracas, which increased not slightly in its incidents under discussion.

The doctor came; her ladyship was better—she had been heard to say that she would have a divorce; Sir Richard had called Mr. Sellars the butler a something or another old fool, and the portly old gentleman had nearly fainted. These and many other things had to be considered; and by eight o'clock it had been decided by the conclave that there would be a divorce; that the establishment at Grosvenor-square would be broken up, and that the sooner they all began to look out for fresh situations the better.

"All of us except Miss Jane," said James, meaningly.

"And why shouldn't I look out too?" said the young lady in question.

"Oh, I'm sure I don't know," said James sneeringly—"I'm sure I don't know, if you don't."

"Well, I shouldn't," said Jane, sturdily.

"No, of course not," laughed James—"he, he, he!"

"Because," said Jane, not heeding the interruption, "I should keep to my dear child. Come what might, I'd never leave him."

"Oh, no, I dare say not," laughed James. "You're very fond of him, aint you?"

"Yes, I am," said Jane, "bless him! He's a little limb, I know, but that's only his spirit; for a dearer, more affectionate little fellow never lived, and he loves me quite as much as he does his ma."

"That aint why you won't look out, Jane," said James, grinning.

"Then, why is it then, please, Mr. Clever?" said Jane, defiantly.

"Because—because—there, I won't tell you," sneered James; "your face is as red as a turkey cock's now."

"You may say what you like for me," said Jane, carelessly. "I'm not going away, so I tell you."

"Not till somebody comes," sneered James; and at that moment the door opened to admit the scullery-maid, who came up to Jane's side to whisper, in a voice heard over the hall—

"If you please, Jane, here's Mr. 1543."

CHAPTER XLIV.

FREE.

DO you know Coldbath Fields prison, one side of which, with the entrance gate, abuts on Coldbath-square, a cheerful locality from whatever way you approach—up hill from dingy Gray's Inn-lane, down hill from Meredith-street, or from the flanks? There used to be a tree in Coldbath-square which seemed as if the cold bath had been too great a shock to its system, for that tree died after getting to a fair size. But still it stood, and was useful; for it formed a corner into which area railings were fitted, and it got to be in time a trunk of polished wood, not French polished, but English and Irish—for the shoulders of innumerable people were rubbed against it as they stood out there and waited.

It may not have occurred to everybody, but there are two or three classes of people who—to use the slang phrase—"do their bit" in a gaol; notably there are the wilfully vicious and the unfortunate. Now these people, irrespective of class, have friends; and, as a rule, the more wilfully vicious a person may be—in plainer English, the greater scoundrel—the larger his circle of acquaintances; while of those who appertain to the unfortunate the number may be very small.

As a matter of course, when Bill, or Jack, or Sally gets into trouble, there is a large assembly of friends to see him or her in the court, and give a cheer when he or she goes off to the van; but notably is that assemblage increased when, the month or six weeks being ended, the said Bill, Jack, or Sally is to come out of gaol—the friends assembling at an early hour outside the prison gates, and waiting to give their friend an ovation.

You may see them on certain mornings outside any of the great prison gates, and notably lounging about Coldbath-square, the dingy walls of which delectable spot give them leaning room for hours and hours. There are some strange types here. The truly unfortunate—a wretched, hollow-eyed woman, in clean rags, waiting to be the first to welcome a husband; a tottering old man, staring dull-eyed at the gate which shall open by and by for the exit of a daughter; a stricken mother on the watch for the son who fell away that once, she is sure, from temptation stronger than he could resist, and

in spite of a feeling of loathing she stands right in the thick of the little crowd, that she may be the first to see him, lest evil companions shall be in waiting and counteract the good that she would do.

She is very neatly dressed, this woman, and her eyes are red yet with the tears she could not keep down before she came; and it is hard upon her to listen to the two red-armed, slatternly wenches who are waiting for Tom, who said he could "do his bit upon his head," having received two months for some innocently playful robbery with violence, a repetition of which will ensure him the cat, and years in place of months.

They were all there, these same types of people, one dingy, wet morning, when the fog and blacks hung heavy in the air; and they were supplemented, too, by a few noisy Irish of both sexes from Gray's Inn-lane, waiting for a couple of "boys," who had been too liberal with the stick and their boots in a row.

"Why don't they let 'em out?" said one.

"An' its jist wanting me behind them they are, the dirty omadhauns!" exclaimed another, in a high-pitched Milesian tenor.

But the gate did not open, and the watchers stayed on, comparing notes on crime and punishment that made more than one shiver.

"Ah," said one woman, with a sigh, "it's all very well to talk about not being long, and not being long; but it takes a great piece out of a man's life every time he's locked up, and he's got nothing to show for it at all."

She was quite right; for of all the ways of living fast, perhaps imprisonment is the most killing. Condemn a well-educated man of thirty to fifteen or twenty years' penal servitude, and ask a statistician what are his chances of living to the end of his time. Very few, you will find. While in a state of freedom he might have reached to sixty, seventy, or even eighty. It is living fast to be dissipated; but a prisoner runs, unknown to himself, very rapidly through his span of life. To him the days seem to crawl, and he gets confused at last, even to mingling one with the other; but life is winging away at an express rate. The candle is for him burning rapidly at both ends.

That month's imprisonment sapped as far into Rivière's constitution as two years of ordinary life. The turnkeys got into the habit of calling him the "French lion," and

point out to this day the cell he occupied, worn by his rapid steps, as he walked ceaselessly up and down whenever he could find himself free from prison routine.

He had had no communication with the outer world, accepting stolidly his fate, and sitting and planning for the future. He did not know, then; but the newspaper report never reached Marie. Neither did it come under the notice of Lady Lawler, who only knew of the facts from her husband, who was lamb-like now in his attentions; for her ladyship was confined for a fortnight to her bed, Sir Brandon Cure declaring her situation to be most precarious. There was a breach, though, now between husband and wife, which grew wider every day, though Rivière knew it not.

And now the month was up, and the hour of release came. The gate opened, and, faint and trembling, Rivière hurried out into the presence of the little crowd waiting so anxiously for those they called their own. He could not help shuddering as he heard the various comments and encountered each gaze, wishing the while that it was blackest night, in order that he might escape unnoticed.

It was like running the 'gauntlet, that first getting away; and even after he had passed into the busy streets, it seemed to him that every one he met stared hard at him, and remarked that he was a felon.

He was partly right, for his appearance did excite attention; people stared very hard at the strange, wild-looking man, whose sunken, hollow eyes were full of fire, and glanced angrily right and left, as if in search of an enemy. However, he dived down the most secluded streets, and hurried on towards Soho, his heart beating strangely as he neared the spot where was all he held dear in life.

But now a strange feeling of vacillation came over him, and he dared not enter the street. A cold perspiration stood upon his forehead, and he leaned against a railing for support. Then recovering himself somewhat, he staggered on to one of the cafés which he had been in the habit of frequenting, and taking out the few pence that had been returned to him that morning, he called for and hastily swallowed a *petit verre*.

This recovered him; and he sat down for a while, looking round carelessly at the occupants of the place, to see face after face without either recognition or retention. He

might have seen that he was an object of remark; but his thoughts were of that room that he was about to visit, and he rose slowly, gave one glance round, and then passed out, trying hard to summon up courage for his task. But, no; something seemed to draw him back—to keep him now that he was free: he seemed to be tenfold a prisoner; and at last he hurried into the square, and began to walk round and round the railings, thinking over the past as well as his confused mind would permit, and calculating the chances of a reconciliation.

Calling himself a coward and fool, he at length strode boldly down the street, found the door open, and hurriedly ran up the stairs to the second floor, where he paused for a few moments in indecision; then hurriedly turning the handle, he entered, to find himself in a comfortably furnished apartment, face to face with a strange woman and his landlady.

Had he come into the wrong room? No, there could be no mistake: that was the window where he had sat and seen Lemaire. He knew it by that particular crack, staring one pane; otherwise, but for the landlady's presence, he might have thought that he was in the wrong house.

For a few seconds there was silence—the women starting back, half frightened.

"Thousand pardons!" said Rivière at last. "But my wife?"

"What, don't you know, sir?" said the landlady, looking pale and agitated, visibly trembling before her lodger.

"I know, woman!—know what?"

"I thought, sir—"

"Well, speak. Do you not see that I am in agony? What should I know?"

"I thought you had fetched her—told her to—"

"Will you speak out?" cried Rivière, furiously. "Where is my wife?"

"She's gone, Mister Rivvyer," said the woman, taking refuge in an assumption of anger; "and what's more—"

"Stop!" he exclaimed, waving his hand in a dazed way. "Speak slowly—I am confused. You—say—she is gone," he continued, huskily. "Where has she gone?"

"Ah, that's what I want to know," said the landlady, whose voice was now gathering force. "It's hard lines, I can tell you, letting lodgings to such people. But perhaps you have come to—"

"Woman!" said Rivière, huskily, "I

want my wife. You say she has gone. She should not have been left, but I was forced away. Now tell me"—he gasped here—"did any one come while I was away? No, no, impossible! She left a note?"

The landlady shook her head.

"Well, a message? Give it me. Do you not see my anxiety?"

"She didn't leave nothing—nothing at all," said the landlady, uneasily. "She went away sudden a fortnit ago, and that's all that I or anybody knows about it. And this lady's been here a week."

"But a moment—listen!" said Rivière. "I am surprised—I do not understand. Did any one come to see her—to take her away?"

"No one but that gentleman as used to meet her in the streets. He came twice that I saw, perhaps more."

"And—and—"

"Did they go away together? Well, I'm not going to say they did, nor I'm not going to say they didn't. All I know is, that Mrs. Rivvyer went away, and I've never seen her since."

"Mon Dieu!"

CHAPTER XLV.

LOST.

NO words could express the agony of the tone in which Rivière uttered those two words, as the desolate man, hunted ever as it were by fate, gazed wildly for a few moments from one woman to the other; and then, after clutching vainly at one or two pieces of furniture, reeled and fell heavily to the ground.

For a few moments the two women called loudly for help—vainly, though; for at that hour they were the only occupants of the house. Then, recovering themselves, they fetched water, vinegar, salts, and bathed the face of the stricken man till he showed signs of revival.

"There, I don't see why one should make all this fuss over a furriner, who was always a bad lodger," said the landlady. "They owe me over a month now; and his wife going off like that without notice, and leaving me with them bits of things—and not much of them—to keep in the lumber attic till they pay."

"He's getting better now, poor thing," said the other woman. "Poor fellow, how bad he looks! Has she run away from him?" she whispered.

"No—no—no," cried Rivière, starting up—"it is not true—she was too loyal. I will know all about it. I will find her if she's in this world; and, mon Dieu, if she has gone to another, I will follow," he added, softly. "But—I am better now—tell me, she went away. When?"

"A fortnight ago this very day."

"Did she tell no one she was going?"

"No; the gentleman I told you of came two or three times. He said he was a doctor, and knew madame. He wanted to nurse her when the baby was born, but—"

"What?" cried Rivière—"she was ill?"

"Oh, yes, I forgot you did not know. She was took bad the night you left, and did not come back. She wouldn't see that doctor, and I fetched her mine."

Rivière gasped.

"And why did she go? You drove her away. You were harsh to her."

"Which it's jest what I wasn't," said the woman, trembling. "If she'd been my own sister I couldn't ha' done more."

"But why—why, then, did she leave?"

"Perhaps she thought you wouldn't come back to her again, and she took off and went back home."

Rivière thought for a moment, and then shook his head.

"There must have been another reason," he said.

"I don't know what, then," said the landlady; "only that the French doctor came that morning, for I see him there, talking to her, standing just where you are now, and her standing up before him, with the lovely little baby-girl in her arms."

Rivière started, and shivered with excitement.

"He didn't stop long, and I only saw her twice afterwards; but she was very low, and in the evening, when I went up to ask her if she'd had any news, she was gone, and taken the baby with her, and nothing else, not so much as a bandbox."

Rivière, weak with prison fare, reeled once more; but he caught at a chair back, and steadied himself, till the room, which seemed to move round, ceased to revolve before his eyes.

The women tremblingly awaited his recovery, expecting violent manifestations of grief, and a display of excitement similar to the last; but they were deceived, for slowly moving to a chair, he sat for a few moments with his eyes closed, then he looked from

one to the other in a strange, half-dazed fashion, as of one who had been stunned.

At last, he rose to go.

"Now, don't take on, that's a good man," said the landlady; "I aint a-going to say a word about the rent."

"Don't speak to me yet," said Rivière, speaking in a slow, laborious fashion. "I am ill—I am tired."

He walked to the open window, and stood looking out—seeing no one, but being seen; for there had been a watch kept upon him from the prison gates.

The two women stood watching him for a few moments, as he once more made his way to a chair, sat down, and covered his face with his hands, rested his elbows on his knees, and seemed to be trying to collect his thoughts. Then he spoke, in a cold, hard voice—

"Tell me again, I have lost it—tell me all you know."

"But you aint fit to hear it now, my poor dear," said the landlady, kindly.

"Tell me again all you know," said Rivière, sharply; and the woman obeyed, repeating her words, and telling—not all—of her lodger's sudden disappearance.

"You did not see her go—whether anyone was with her?" said Rivière, softly; and his voice was so altered that his hearers started.

"No—nothing more than I have told you," said the landlady. "She said once, when she was worried, that you had forsaken her in her trouble for some one else; and begged of me not to turn her away—just, you know, as if I could have been such a beast. But now, come downstairs to my rooms, and I'll make you a cup of tea directly; and then you can lie down on the sofa for a bit, and you'll be better after. Lord, ma'am," she continued, addressing her tenant, "if there's a blessing in this world in disguise, it's tea, and no end of good it's done me in my time. But come on down now, Mister Rivvyer, there's a good man."

She approached him, and took his arm as she spoke; but he slowly rose and shook himself free.

"No, no," he said softly, stretching out his hands the while, in a blind, helpless fashion—"she has gone, and I must find her—must find her. She is mine—my wife."

"In the name of Marie—and in this strange land!" Jane, smothered a wild pathos in the way in which she said, "The next

the listeners, and brought tears to their eyes, as they stood watching him till he had descended half the stairs, when the landlady recovered herself.

"He mustn't go like that, poor soul—he'll be jumping off one of the bridges, or poisoning himself at the chemist's! Do you go down and stop him. I can't, for the trembling as there is in my poor legs is something awful."

The lodger hesitated, for she was trembling too. But after a few moments, she went to the door, hesitated again, and then they both went down together; but they were too late: Rivière had left the house—bent, aged, and wan, to creep slowly over the flags from street to street, muttering softly—

"I must find her—must find her, even if she be lost to me for ever."

Then, on and on he went, and ever with a dark shadow dogging his steps, till the night fell chill and gloomy—fit time for murder, should it be abroad.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

TUNEFUL NUMBERS.

IT is not that I mind the tones of a piano; on the contrary, when well played, I could listen to one for hours. What I do object to is the thinness of the walls in semi-detached villas, which obliges one to listen, hour after hour, to the "thumple, thumple, tum; thumple, thumple, thum," of the next door instrument, till one's teeth are set on edge, and every nerve is jarred with the discordance. Pianos are strange things: they come and they go by the thousand; but what becomes of them nobody knows. It is perfectly astonishing what a number that respectable widow lady who advertises in the daily papers has to sell. At first, a feeling of pitiful condolence stole over your contributor as he thought of the many times the poor lone woman had to advertise, year after year, spending so much in advertisements; and yet nobody would buy. Of course she must have gone far beyond the value of the instrument; and still she persevered. The feeling of pity, though, has oozed out and gone to those unfortunates who have bought her piano twenty, thirty, fifty times over; for the public is gullible, and will go bargain hunting to its cost.

Thinking so much about pianos set one wondering how they were made; and this

wonderment resulted in the silk fretwork frame being removed, and a cursory inspection being made of the works. This was all very well, but unsatisfying; so, troubled with a thirst for knowledge, your Observer made his way one fine morning to the neighbourhood of the Regent's Park, where stood a tall building, like a superior chapel whose minister had gone into the timber trade, and had his yard in the rear. This proved to be the factory of Messrs. Hopkinson, of Regent-street—not that your Observer was surprised thereat, for he had gone on purpose to see it and the making of a piano from beginning to end.

The beginning, then, was the introduction to a member of the firm, who called in an aide-de-camp in the shape of a foreman, whose forte was, and always had been, pianos. Under this guidance, our first step was into the yard, for a wander amongst the stacks of piled-up wood of all kinds, sorts, and sizes, each valuable for some especial part of pianos; for do not imagine, O purchaser, that if you buy a walnut piano it is walnut throughout—far from it, for even a walnut has a kernel. To go through all would be tedious; but here are a few of the kinds stacked for use—spruce and pine, black walnut, maple, oak, ash, mahogany, rosewood, pear tree, beech, chestnut, lime, and sycamore.

And here are some of the uses to which it is put, for none of these are for ornamental work, but are used in the internal construction, and are chosen for some especial quality—strength, durability, or resonance. For instance, beech cut in a particular way is used for the parts of the instrument which hold the iron pegs turned in tuning the piano, and it is cut so that the peg may be driven through several of the consecutive rings which mark the tree's growth. But this peg-holder will not merely be a bed of solid beech, but be crossed and recrossed with oak and sycamore—the latter being the outer, and forming the polished, satiny wood so familiar to those who open the top of a piano.

The main internal framework is of spruce, strong and sturdy of uprights, and very heavy and solid; and in some cases the wood is superseded by iron. The stacks of lime tree are for cutting up into keys, the black walnut and pear for cases—the former for receiving some handsome veneer, and the latter to be blackened or ebonized, and

to form those handsome Pompeian or Etruscan patterned pianos, so striking in their jetty blackness and light gold ornamentation.

Stack after stack of wood, standing to season, some for three years, some even for twelve. These logs are for sawing up; those small pieces, neatly packed, are to form the cores of piano legs; and these neat chests?

Ah, we must have a few words about those cases. Everybody knows that Bohemia is famous for its beautiful glass, and that there are large works there where the beautiful stained and engraved glass is turned out in such perfection. It would hardly be supposed that the Bohemian glass works could in any way be connected with an English pianoforte manufactory; but so it is, for these chests come from Bohemia, and they contain, neatly cut and smoothed to a wonderful smoothness, six and seven feet planks of silver fir, completely filling each case; and when a thin plank is drawn out it is clear, pure, and bright as so much satin.

This is what is commonly called Swiss pine, and comes from the Bohemian forests; all the rough and knotty parts being utilized for the glass making, while the choice cut and smoothed hearts are sent over to England to form the sounding-boards of pianos.

Leaving the wood-yard, we enter a building where the wood is cut up by various machines. Here are circular saws, which seem to hiss and shriek through the wood applied to their whizzing teeth. Close by is a thin serrated ribbon of steel, which runs over drums, and cuts with fearful speed through a piece of wood; for this is a French band saw, and seems continuous in its action. Farther on, we have curious engines devoted to the saving of labour in the torture of wood into various forms, notably a machine for making dowells—the dowell being the wooden peg used in fastening portions of the piano together, and answering to the treenail of a ship.

Steam engines and boilers, of course, are here—the steam going to warm the rooms. We are now shown heaps and piles of veneers, thin paper-like slices of the choicest grained walnut or rosewood, the former having been sliced like a huge shaving from the parent trunk, and the rosewood sawn off infinitely thin. There must be a fortune lying in these cellar-like rooms; for every foot of veneer in these heaps has a price, and one which is not light.

We now ascend to the work-rooms, where the construction is going on; some two hundred and fifty men and boys being at work, and to some purpose; for from thirty to forty complete pianos are turned out every week.

As we enter it is to be saluted by a great noise. Here are men doing regular joiner's work, fitting together the heavy frames, planing, sawing, hammering, and using chisel and mallet. Close by is one preparing the wrest-planks, glueing pine, beech, oak, and sycamore on to deal. Another is fitting the beautiful thin pieces of silver fir together, to form sounding-boards; making it thin here and thick there, and giving it a curve and graduation with as much nicety as might an old violin maker have employed over the belly of one of his choicest instruments.

Again a few steps, and a man is busy boring holes with a centre-bit into the plank, ready for the pegs, which in another place a boy busies himself over in stringing; but before this framework is ready for stringing, though it possesses its polished sounding-board, the rows of tiny wire pegs have to be driven into the bridge, forming a curve, ready for the other ends of the wires. A man does this, driving in the little pegs till they look quite ornamental.

Now comes, though perhaps not in direct sequence, the work of the above-named lad, who is a stringer; for as soon as possible—that is, as soon as the stage of manufacture is sufficiently advanced—the strings are fitted on, so as to get the tension of wire and frame, that it may afterwards know neither stretch nor give, either of which means being out of tune. The boy is armed with a hammer and a number of the iron pegs which we have all seen the tuner attack before now, and the wires—from thick, copper-covered strings for the deep bass notes, to the thin wires of the treble.

This boy is only one of many similarly engaged, and great is the noise they make. But they are active in their movements. A string is uncoiled from the neat ring in which it lies; one end is looped over the lower peg, the other is threaded through a peg, given one or two twists, and bang, bang, bang! the peg is driven tight into its beechen bed—the string, and its already fixed neighbours, jarring in hideous clangour.

We leave the lad busily driving in, and wiring the frame, and pass on a few yards farther, where other wired frames are stand-

ing, and from which come discordant but somewhat musical sounds. These boys might be supposed to be amusing themselves; but they are not, for they are “chipping up” the rude, unfinished instruments. In other words, they are giving the first tuning to the wires; for our piano has now neither key, hammer, nor damper. This, then, is the process: the boys are furnished with the regular tuning hammer and a tiny piece of ivory; and as they turn the pegs, they produce the musical notes by tinkling the wires—“chipping” the wires, as it is called here.

As a matter of course, this first tuning is a very incorrect one; for the boys are but 'prentice hands, and the wires are new and given to stretch.

Passing on, we come next to men busy veneering sides of piano cases, and the cylinder falls that cover the keys. The wood is taken, scored over with a toothed plane, to make it rough and ready to hold the glue, which we are shown heating in kettles in a room; and such glue!—a fragment of it dry is of the purest, clearest gelatine, a splinter being sharp enough of edge to cut and of point to pierce. The thin veneer of walnut-wood has been cut most carefully, fellow pieces being arranged to form a pattern, and joined together with strips of paper. This is then glued on to the fall, and kept in its place by a piece of zinc, the same shape, pressed to it tightly till quite dry and ready for scraping, sand-papering, and polishing. This process takes place in another part of the building; the polisher's hand acting like magic upon the dingy wood, which, with every touch, grows brighter, richer, and more glowing of grain.

There is scarcely room to pass along amongst the benches, heaped up and piled with work in various stages of progress; but at every turn there is something interesting to catch the eye. Here is a man busy with a piece of soft, even, lime-tree wood, upon which he is placing the little oblong plates of ivory that a fellow-worker has been roughing on one side, after taking them out of a packet which he held up for inspection. This is close-grained, hard, white ivory from Africa. These pieces form the front portions of the keys; the other slips are longer, to go between the black ebony flats and sharps. The key-board is one piece, and sawn up to form the seven octaves—a length of compass that my companion agrees with me is quite

unnecessary, and only a matter of fashion; for six octaves would be ample for all musical purposes.

Again men veneering; and, as your contributor remarks upon the beauty of the walnut-wood, he learns that it is called by courtesy "Italian walnut," but comes from the Black Sea district—from Persia, Circassia, and Egypt. The burr near the root is the most ornamental part, from its heavy, knotty grain; and this is, literally used in shavings, thirty-two to the inch, veneered, probably, on a commoner kind of walnut.

Here we find the key-board in a greater state of progress: the ebony keys from Ceylon are fixed, the ivory is polished, and green baize is being fitted in parts to keep rattling at a distance.

The mechanical part—the hammers and dampers—are a separate branch, and the hammers are covered with a graduated felt, a web of which we see—a clean, close white cloth, so contrived in the manufacture that one end is thick to suit the bass hammers, and the other thin for the treble; the cloth, therefore, can be cut off in strips, each strip being suited to clothe a complete set of hammers.

Passing on from the jangle of wires, hammers, and resonant boards, we next come upon the ornamental parts of the instrument. Here is one polishing the legs, and another fitting in the beautiful cut fretwork of rosewood—a delicate, lace-like pattern, that has been cut six-fold through half a dozen thin slips of wood at once. Another is fixing on the top of a nearly finished instrument; and here we are told an anecdote of a lady who was being shown over the works by Mr. Hopkinson. She admired greatly all the operations of the men; but towards the termination of her visit exclaimed—

"Of course you put the tone in the instruments yourself."

And now we are in silence, for this is the store-room; and we pause for breath, for we have been shot up to the top of the building in a lift which put one strongly in mind of a mine, and we have been from floor to floor, gathering a little here and a little there. This, though, is a change; and the wonder to the visitor is that so many different things can be needed for a full-compass trichord, with all the newest improvements. It is almost bewildering. Those deer-skins? for covering parts of the hammers. Those brass candle-holders? for the

front. Those rolls of coloured silk? for the plaits behind the fret. Glue, brass, tin, iron, nails, screws, castors, hinges, felt, ivory, and ebony. There, the articles would make a catalogue; but they are all necessary, and in constant call; for on the floors above and around are about seven or eight hundred instruments in various stages of progress.

It is only right that our last journey should be to the building where the finished instruments are stored; for we have seen the piano as it were grow from a few rough pieces of wood to one of those stately grands or handsome cottages, looking so inviting, with its great mouth open, and its shining rows of teeth, waiting to be touched for it to become vocal with sweet sounds. We are favoured here, and the large room soon fills with the sweet chords from as fine an instrument as one need to hear.

It is unpleasant work, though, this inspection of grand things. One never has anything good but he goes out and sees others that are better. In fact, our own instrument has seemed to wheeze and turn shaky in its keys ever since the inspection of Messrs. Hopkinson's works.

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER VII.

"Most eloquent music."—*Shakespeare*.

JULIA'S face became radiant: the lilies had been admired by the men they were intended to captivate. Could greater happiness be attained? She felt that her day's labour had not been in vain. Captain Nolan, being a wise man in his generation, seeing he had made a good impression, did not remain to destroy it, but went off to storm the Manning fortress, which he instinctively felt would be a difficult undertaking.

After some terribly bad music, in the shape of two murdered songs and a Brinley Richards variation, Agnes sat down to play—to play to him, for intuition told her he was fond of music, and she knew it was her forte. She began in a dead silence. Such is the custom in the non-musical world; but when once the player is fairly started, the supposed listeners become gifted with tongues. An old gentleman generally opens fire; then the old ladies join in with a little grape-shot, which is soon lost in a universal cannonade.

This evening was no exception to the aforesaid rule. Agnes had only played a few

lines when Mr. Wilmot, in an audible whisper, made a remark to Mrs. Manning, who, not wishing to disturb the silence, gently murmured an answer, which of course he, being deaf, could not catch, and began eh-ing? and what-ing? which brought up Mrs. Brownsmith, instant, to the rescue, who, in her sonorous tones, repeated his question and Mrs. Manning's answer. This seemed the signal to break cover: jabber, jabber, away they all went, like a pack of hounds after the first cry.

Of all this Agnes was totally oblivious, until startled by an angry voice saying in her ear—

"How can you play while this infernal noise is going on?"

Said she, betraying her thoughts—

"Then you do like music?"

"Like it! is it not the best expression of the human heart? Words may fail, but music never!" said he, passionately.

Still keeping her eyes on the notes—

"You play?"

"Yes."

"Will you?"

"Heaven forbid, in this Pandemonium; but I am having a piano down from town—you must come and see it; then we will try it together."

Not seeing the feasibility of this plan, she remained silent.

"I cannot think how you, with your soul for music, can play to these Goths."

"That is because you do not understand the state of affairs. When Mrs. Brownsmith comes up, with a gracious smile, and says, 'Dear Miss Lane, would you kindly play, we should all feel it such a treat to hear some of your charming music?' I interpret it thus—'My guests seem very dull, there is no conversation, would you kindly set them off talking?' And why should I not? It is all they care for, and it does not hurt me; in fact, I get many a good practice by it."

"I see, you are trying to persuade yourself and me also that you rather like it than otherwise; but I do not believe it. I know I could not do it—I should stop at once as soon as they began to talk."

"Perhaps you can hardly believe it, but if I were to stop now, there would be a dead pause, and then an immediate cry for another piece. Do you know, I have played a sonata over three times running, and never been detected?"

"Do so now, for me to hear."

"I dare not when Mr. Græme is in the room, he always finds me out."

"Hang Mr. Græme!" thought Captain Nolan, glancing to where the reverend gentleman was seated, half-hidden behind some curtains, apparently still engrossed with the photograms. "I verily believe the old gentleman is listening!" exclaimed he.

"Of course he is," said Agnes; "he is generally my one listener."

"I had no idea that music could possibly penetrate through such a very stiff exterior."

"Then it does not say much for your perceptive powers; for he is very fond of music, and often makes me play to him. He is the dearest, kindest old man in the world, and a great friend of mine," added she, looking up with a defiant glance, totally unaware of the musical passion that beamed from her eyes. This was the first time she had raised her face since she had begun to play, and Captain Nolan was startled at the change in her countenance. Her whole face was alight with musical inspiration, her dark eyes seemed to echo the sounds as they left her fingers. He felt this was music worth listening to, so remained silent, until overpowered by the wish to have another look at those downcast eyes.

"I am not always so dull in penetrating character. You will grant I took old Brandy and Soda and his wife by a coup-de-main at dinner."

"Old who?"

"I thought you objected to the B. and S. style, so gave them their full titles. Do you know, as soon as you disappeared I underwent a murderous cross-fire as to my accident. Luckily I did not contradict myself, but I was very nearly letting out the truth."

He had raised the eyes at last.

"Please, don't!" she exclaimed—"I have not even told my aunt."

"Then why did you look so savage at me when I had purposely come late, not knowing how you expected me to greet you in the drawing-room?"

Involuntarily her fingers stopped, and before Captain Nolan could speak, she was surrounded and overwhelmed with thanks for the delightful entertainment she had given them. Here Mrs. Manning, seeing an opportunity of making a graceful retreat, swooped down on Agnes and carried her off.

A comic song was then sung by the aforesaid Mr. Neville, and listened to in dead

silence; for, as he remarked the next day at mess—

"It does not matter how a fellow sings, if only his song suits his audience."

Captain Nolan, as he stood in the porch lighting his cigar, was somewhat astonished by the staid Mr. Græme offering to walk with him as far as his gates; but, concluding he was glad to get hold of a gentleman who could talk in this out-of-the-way place, thought no more on the subject, and gladly accepted his proposal. The fact was, the clerical mind wished to see more of this man, who seemed to engross the whole of his little pet's attention; so begging him not to forego his cigar on his account, they went out together.

"A splendid old fellow," said Captain Nolan, as he applied the key.

"A fine fellow in many ways; but—"

What the "but" was that weighed so heavily on Mr. Græme's mind never found expression in words; for, looking round his desolate library, with a deep sigh, he relapsed into silence, as he saw his cherished day-dream fading slowly out of sight.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Have always been at daggers drawing,
And one another clapper-clawing;
Not that they really cuff or fence,
But in a spiritual mystic sense."—*Butler*.

EVERY house has its own battle-field.

Those who wish to make public their wounds and skeletons select the dinner table as the scene; for there is generally found the greatest assemblage of witnesses. The nattering wife chooses the tea table as the time to talk her wretched husband into submission, and with consummate skill enlists that cheering but uninebriating beverage as an artful auxiliary on her side. If he prove obdurate to her insinuations, she has only to hold her victim's cup under the tap of the urn, and he succumbs at once.

"Abuse me as much as you like, my dear; but please, oh! please, don't water my tea."

Where there is a large family, the luncheon table is always in a perpetual state of skirmish. Small children crying over who has the largest piece of pudding with the greatest amount of currants. Two boys eating against each other, to see who will get first the second help. A young lady dawdling over her meat, knowing well by experience that she will be helped first, for not "greedily

gobbling up her food;" while the youngest utterly refuses to keep quiet, unless allowed to drink sherry, and otherwise follow its own sweet will.

At Islington Court, the family jars were all fought out over the breakfast table. That delectable meal was held in Mr. Brownsmith's own room of business, which was small enough to prohibit all means of waiting, so it was strictly a private repast; and punctually at half-past eight, the lord and lady of the house sat down. On coming to Islington Court, Mr. Brownsmith had wished to continue his eight o'clock breakfast; but Mrs. Brownsmith, on the plea of sacrificing something to fashion, begged for half an hour's grace, to which, after a great amount of wrangling, he at length consented—but not one moment more than the half-hour. This arrangement greatly annoyed the fair Julia, whom no earthly persuasion could make stir before half-past eight; and as her father, indulgent to a degree in everything else, would not allow breakfast to be kept for her one minute after nine o'clock, she usually made her appearance, in a disordered state of hurry, a few minutes before the allotted time.

The morning after their dinner party was no exception to the general rule, and Mr. and Mrs. Brownsmith sat down to their tête-à-tête breakfast as the half-hour struck from a succession of clocks, wildly scattered over the house.

"Another cup of coffee, my dear, with some sugar in it this time, if you please," said Mr. Brownsmith, looking up from his paper.

"If I please, indeed!" answered his irascible partner. "There is no pleasing you. If I put any in you say it is too sweet, and if I don't, you complain of its being sour."

"I do not think that an unreasonable complaint, my dear; and while I think of it, those red mullet were abominably cooked yesterday. I saw Captain Nolan was obliged to leave them."

"Indeed! they were very well cooked. Major Dashwood, whose opinion I do respect, said they were excellent; as for Captain Nolan, he left nearly everything he took. To let you into a secret, he was so pre-occupied in looking at Julia across the table, that he seemed quite to forget his dinner."

As the fond mother uttered these words,

the door opened, and in walked the object of his supposed solicitude.

With languid air and dishevelled locks, she sat down, put her elbows on the table, and rubbing her sleepy eyes, said—

"I want some coffee, I am so thirsty, I always am after a party." Then in a tone of disgust, "What stuff!" as she took the cup from her mother's hand.

"If you would come down earlier, I could give it you stronger; but your papa does drink so much, there is—"

"When I was your age," put in the paternal branch, "I had to breakfast at seven, and be at the mills before eight. If I had not worked hard when a boy, I should not be the rich man I am now."

Julia, who had been educated at a first-class London school, was perfectly aware of her parent's shortcomings; and to her the very name of mills was as a red rag to a bull, or a white choker to an old maid. Knitting her brows, she said, peevishly—

"Don't be dinning those horrid mills and your low ways of living in those days for ever in my ears." Then, seeing she had gone too far, for if ever man looked angry it was Mr. Brownsmith at that moment, "Papa, dear," she continued, "I am very sorry I was late this morning, but what were you saying about Captain Nolan when I came in?"

"Papa must not tell tales," said the pleased mother, throwing at her husband a look which admonished him to repeat without delay the information she had given.

"Why, Julia, my dear, your mamma tells me you made a conquest of Captain Nolan last night."

"Then she says what is not true," answered his daughter, with an angry, flushed face. "I cannot make him out. He sat staring all the dinner time, yet I could never catch his eye. From something he said afterwards, I think he was admiring the water lilies in my hair. He was very agreeable after dinner; but did not you see he went behind the piano as soon as Agnes Lane began to play, and there he stayed talking for more than an hour, as if he had known her for years? What he can see in that little child I do not know. I never knew any man before, who was introduced to us at the same time, who did not at once begin talking to me."

"But, my love, you had all the officers talking to you; and you say you like military men better than country gentlemen."

"So I do; and is not Captain Nolan military? He is in the artillery."

"Ah, yes; but they only dress in blue, and go about with big cannon. Quite inferior to those in red, I should say, my love."

"I cannot say. All I know, he is a captain, so must be in the army somehow. And I do not see why he should talk more to Agnes Lane than to me. I won't have any," said she, irritably, pushing away all the proffered food.

"My love," said Mrs. Brownsmith, soothingly, "I know better. You must not get these foolish fancies in your head, as if anybody who had once really seen you would care to look twice at little Agnes Lane. And we can have him to dine here again. What says papa?"

"Certainly. Nice gentlemanly fellow, very—quite one you like to see at your own table. I will ask him to drop in in a friendly way. Is that what you would like, Julia?"

"Do not ask me, I think him intensely disagreeable. But as he is a neighbour, he ought to be invited; and you might say, papa, 'We have tea at five, dinner at seven, and should be glad to see him whenever he felt inclined to come.'"

"If you please, sir," said the footman, arrayed in chrysalis costume, "Captain Nolan wishes to speak to you."

"The very man we wanted!" exclaimed Mr. Brownsmith. "Show him in. Bring him here, James. The devil!"

This escaped from his lips in his utter surprise at seeing the effect his words, "Bring him here," had on his wife and daughter. Up they jumped, bringing down spoons and forks in their haste, and disappeared through a door leading to the kitchens.

"Well," continued he, "I never shall understand women's ways. From their talk, you would think there was nobody in the world they would like to see sooner than Captain Nolan; and yet, when I invite him in, they both make a clean bolt of it."

He quite forgot, poor man, that his wife was never visible out of the bosom of her own family before twelve o'clock. For in the morning Mrs. Brownsmith appeared as God had made her, in the afternoon as man had; and the fair Julia was so late a riser that she had only time in the morning to shake herself and come down.

The author of this commotion entered the room with a suppressed smile, which

became an open one on seeing a fork and spoon on the floor, and an untasted cup of coffee on the table. Luckily, his moustache was long and thick, and so covered a multitude of sins.

"You must excuse my coming so early, as I have a long ride before me; and hearing you say yesterday you liked to transact all business in the morning, I ventured to call in on my way, to ask your opinion on a question of drainage."

Mr. Brownsmith's little eyes rolled with delight. Here was an acknowledgment of his country acquirements.

"Very pleased if my poor opinion can be of the slightest service to you, captain. Won't you have some breakfast? No; then let us proceed at once to this little business of yours. I think you said you wanted to drain your land—very glad to hear it; there are not many young men in these days who think land requires draining at all."

Said Captain Nolan, twiddling in his hands the hat, gloves, and riding whip which he held dangling over the back of his chair—

"You have not quite got the case. It is not I, but my tenant who wants me to drain him some fields. As I am utterly ignorant on these matters, and heard you had been very successful in drainage, I presumed on your kindness, and came to ask your advice."

"Quite right to take me at my word, captain. When I said I should be happy to be of service to you in any way, I meant it." Then, waving his hands—"Can you tell me, is it the whole of the farm or only some grass land you want draining?"

"I am sorry I do not know if it is grass or arable land, but you may; for the place they want draining is called the 'ten-acre field.'"

"Yes, yes—ah, yes, certainly," said Mr. Brownsmith, rubbing his hands; "this draining is an expensive business, very. I should advise you to make your tenant provide the labour, and you find the pipes. The best plan, I think, will be for you to meet me and my steward to-morrow, say at ten o'clock. We will have a look at the field, and then he can draw you up an estimate, which will give some idea of what requires to be done."

"I will meet you to-morrow, with the greatest of pleasure." He had half-risen from his chair; but on second thoughts, sat

down again, and said, "By the bye, though it is taking time rather by the forelock, I hope you will continue still to follow your game on to my ground, as you have always been accustomed to do. I shall not dare to shoot a pheasant on my land, as I understand they all come from your and Mrs. Manning's well-stocked preserves."

"No, no, captain; that is a very good little plantation of yours by the river, and you will have plenty of game there, now that path is stopped up. I thank you for continuing your permission to shoot into your land, and beg you to consider yourself free to shoot over all my preserves."

Captain Nolan's eyes sparkled with pleasure; for, being a true Englishman, he dearly loved killing something.

"I am afraid you will find you have made a bad bargain, for I am so devoted to shooting, I can never lay aside a gun I have once taken up."

"Not at all. Young Lord Turing told me, when shooting here last September, that I ought to consider myself a deuced lucky fellow to be able to follow my game on to your ground; for at his father's place they lost half their birds on a few acres which ran into the middle of their preserves, belonging to a blackguard who did not preserve. Those were his very words; so you see the obligation lies entirely on my side."

Captain Nolan bowed his acknowledgments, and was rising to go, when Mr. Brownsmith, lowering his voice, continued confidentially—

"Though I do not shoot myself, I like my friends to enjoy themselves when staying with me, and that is why I preserve. You know, captain, to shoot or ride well you ought to begin when a boy; now, all my young days were spent hard at work inside the mills. I have no son, and Julia cannot shoot; so my only hope is in having a son-in-law some day who can shoot. I tell her she may choose any one she likes; but he must be a good shot, and a gentleman. I do not care about money; she will have plenty. I would give a good sum down, and allow two thousand a year, to see her comfortably settled. I dare say you are surprised to hear she has not been caught up yet; but Julia is very particular, takes odd fancies, and will not have anybody. She is a good-looking girl—I may well be proud of her, eh, captain?"

"Certainly, a most charming young lady,"

said the individual addressed, feeling rather bored, and wondering what could be Mr. Brownsmith's object in confiding all this to him. What a pity he could not fall down and worship at the feet of this golden calf! A good sum down!—what hidden joy did those words contain. Two thousand a year and a pretty girl, what a windfall for any fellow! But he felt it was not for him. A year ago, he would have thought it the luckiest chance in his life; and now he was listening with utter indifference to all this wealth and beauty spread out before him. England had worked a revolution in his feelings. What he had held in India to be the one thing needed, in England he would not so much as put out his hand and take. "It is a nuisance the girl is not my style," thought he, "as there is no doubt I have made a good impression on the parents"—which reflection was immediately confirmed by Mr. Brownsmith's next words.

"We hope, being such near neighbours, you will drop in whenever you feel inclined. You must find the Red House very lonely in the evenings. We dine at seven, and shall always be glad to see you."

"Notwithstanding the vulgarity of the seniors, they are uncommonly civil and hospitable; and a good dinner is not to be despised in an out-of-the-way place like this. If only Mrs. Manning would unbend, and give a fellow a similar invitation, I could live here very comfortably," soliloquized Captain Nolan, while riding by the side of the park and under the shade of the Heathfield oaks.

Mr. Brownsmith, with hands spread out, sat like a peacock with his tail up, pondering over all he had said. First a shuffle was heard, then a thud against the wall; and in bounced his partner for better or worse, followed by the fair Julia.

"What have you been talking about all this time, papa, dear? If I had known he was going to stop so long, I should have dressed, and come down; but, thinking I should not have time, I sat with mamma at the top of the stairs, waiting to see him go."

"Who ever heard," chimed in Mrs. Brownsmith's silvery tones, "of any one making such an early call, and stopping so long? Of course, your papa forgot to ask him to dinner; men never do remember those little politenesses."

"Come here, my dear," said her father,

taking his daughter's hands in his, and kissing her rosy cheeks. "Your mamma thinks I can do nothing right this morning, so I will tell you to expect to see Captain Nolan at dinner any day. Naturally, he will be rather shy about coming at first; but I saw through him. Ah, ah! he little thought what a sly old dog he was talking to," added he, winking and blinking his little eyes in a vain attempt to look knowing; till, remembering he had a railway appointment two stations down the line, he rose in a hurry. On leaving the room, he turned round, with the handle of the door in his hand, and cast his parting shaft—

"Julia, you will come down early to-morrow, for I have to meet Captain Nolan at ten in the morning, and I do not wish to keep him waiting."

Mother and daughter looked at each other, then at the holder of the door handle, who, from that hour, was greatly raised in the estimation of both.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE fact of the rector's engagement to Miss Middleton soon became known. One of the first who mentioned it to me was Sir John, who looked in at my office a few days previous to his departure for London—where his daughter, by the way, created no little sensation.

"I can understand it all now, doctor," said the baronet on that occasion—"I mean, why she has refused so many good offers; and yet I think it is a pity—though I am glad of it, too, for several reasons. I used to like Charles very much at one time; but my opinion has undergone some change, I must confess. What do you think of him yourself? Would you, if you were in my position, allow him to marry your daughter?"

"No, Sir John," I replied, with much reluctance, "I would not, if I could help it; but you cannot interfere, for Miss Middleton is of full age, and, if I mistake not, of a sufficiently determined disposition not to lightly give up any thing or project upon which she has set her heart."

"You are right," returned the baronet. "She told me about it this morning; and

feeling that it was no use to say anything, I replied—

"Very well, my dear, I wish you joy."

"About the wisest course you could have taken, Sir John. But what about your own matrimonial prospects, if I may venture to inquire?"

"Quite so—quite so," replied the old gentleman, with a sigh; "that is all past and over."

"In that direction, possibly," I answered, in a cheerful tone; "but there are many more young ladies in Highshire, and, I think, one in the same family, who would be only too happy to say yes, if you gave them the opportunity of so doing."

"Hem!" replied the baronet—"yes, I dare say; but you see, doctor, even an old man's fancy must count for something in the matter. I cannot turn and change about all in a moment, like my prospective son-in-law and my daughter."

"Excuse me, Sir John, I think there never has been any change there whatever, from the first. Their love has been hidden behind a cloud for some time, it is true; but now the mist is clearing off, and all will soon be bright sunshine once more."

The baronet sighed again.

"Heaven grant it may," he said.

Lady Georgina St. Clair took a very different view of the case.

"It is perfectly disgraceful!" she exclaimed with animation, referring to the contemplated marriage; "and I do hope and trust the bishop will take it up. I suppose," she continued, "he will not have the impudence to remain here."

"Mr. Woodward," I replied, "informed me the other day that it was his intention to resign his living as soon as he was married, and that he and his wife would probably go to Australia for a time."

"I wish he would go at once," said Lady Georgina; "and I hope I may never see him again. I am sure, if I did, I could not be commonly civil to him."

At this moment, Augusta burst noisily into the room.

"Pa, Louisa is going to Ardmore. May I go with her?"

"Yes, my dear, if you like," replied her father.

"I forbid you," cried her mother. "I will not allow you to go there any more."

"My dear Georgina, listen to me," exclaimed Mr. St. Clair.

"Augusta, leave the room," commanded her ladyship.

The young lady looked at her father, as much as to say—

"Shall I go?"

Mr. St. Clair nodded his head.

"Go, my dear. I will call you in by and by."

Augusta retired, and I rose up, and took my leave.

On calling, later in the day, at Ardmore, I found both the Miss St. Clairs there—the younger, by the way, looking rather disconsolate, for the baronet, it seemed, had gone to Pennyletter, and Louisa and Miss Middleton were too much engrossed by the doubtless interesting communications they had to make to each other, to pay much attention to her; so that my arrival was a veritable godsend to the lively damsel, who directly she saw me exclaimed—

"Doctor, would you mind driving me over to see Mrs. Cochrane and the children? They'll be sure to send the car for me in the evening."

"Certainly," I replied—"if Miss St. Clair, who for the present stands in loco parentis, has no objection."

"Dear me, no," returned Louisa—"not in the least. The car can go for you, dear. I'll send Frank on when he comes here for us to-night."

After sitting for a few minutes, I went to see the patient, one of the servants, who was the occasion of my calling at the castle; and, on returning to the drawing-room, found Augusta ready, and was shortly on my way home, accompanied by that vivacious young lady.

"You will find Emma inside somewhere," I have no doubt," I said, as I assisted my young charge to alight at my house. "Will you tell her from me that I shall not be in for half an hour or so, as I have some medicine to put up in the surgery?"

When I entered, my wife and our guest were in the sitting-room waiting for my return, and I immediately perceived that something had occurred to agitate or annoy the former, who exclaimed—

"Oh, Tom, I am so glad you have come back. This must be put a stop to."

"What must, my dear?" I asked, in no little amazement.

"This horrible engagement," returned my wife.

"What engagement, dear?"

"Augusta has just told me that Miss Middleton and Mr. Woodward are actually engaged to be married. It is perfectly horrible. I shall go to Ardmore to-morrow, and tell her so. In fact, I would have gone at once, only it is rather late."

"Nonsense, my dear—" I began.

"But, my dear," replied my wife, speaking rapidly, and in considerable agitation, "it is not nonsense. I know I shall not sleep all night thinking of it."

"Why, my dear," I asked, at a loss to understand her excitement, "what is there horrible about it?"

"Mrs. Cochrane thinks poor Mrs. Woodward is not dead," explained Augusta.

"Pooh!" I exclaimed—"nonsense! Of course she is."

"Very well, Tom," replied my wife—"you think so, I do not. I am sure she is alive; and I shall certainly see Miss Middleton, and tell her so. I could not rest if I did not; and I am sure you would do just the same if you were in my place."

"If I thought poor Mrs. Woodward was still alive, my dear, I most decidedly should."

And so it was arranged.

Emma drove over in the morning to Ardmore, and found Miss Middleton with Louisa in the breakfast-room.

After the introductory kisses and usual meteorological observations had been exchanged, my wife requested a few minutes' private conversation with the heiress, who, turning to Louisa, said—

"Excuse me, dear, for a short time," and led the way into the large drawing-room, my wife following with beating heart and trembling knees, and almost repenting of the resolution she had taken.

"Pray be seated, Mrs. Cochrane," said the heiress when she had closed the door, and pointed to a chair, into which poor Emma rather fell than sat.

For some seconds my wife felt as if she could not speak; and Miss Middleton, perceiving her agitation, exclaimed, with much feeling—

"Compose yourself, Mrs. Cochrane. I trust you have had no bad news from Robert."

"Oh, no," replied Emma—"oh, no, Miss Middleton, it is not that—it is something that concerns you."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the lady, with an air of supreme indifference.

"Yes—something very, very important."

"Oh."

"Yes, Miss Middleton. I trust you will excuse me, and not misinterpret my motives in coming here. If you only knew how deeply I feel your kindness to my brother!"

"I beg you will not mention that—it is I who am the obliged party, for he has saved me the mortification of having a stepmother; so if that is all you have come to say—"

"Oh, no, Miss Middleton, it is about your—your engagement with—with Mr. Woodward."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the heiress, haughtily. "It is doubtless to your good husband I am indebted for the spreading of that report."

"No, my husband did not speak to me about it until I first mentioned it to him. I heard of it from Augusta St. Clair, and could not rest until I had seen you."

"Very kind, I am sure."

"Oh, Miss Middleton," exclaimed my wife, with tears in her eyes, "I am so sorry for you, if you really love him, as I suppose you do."

The heiress looked surprised and indignant, but made no remark.

"I know how I would feel if I were in your place, for poor Mrs. Woodward is not dead!"

"Not dead!" exclaimed Miss Middleton, with a violent start. "Impossible, Mrs. Cochrane—impossible!"

"Alas! I am sure she is not."

"How do you know? But no, it is impossible."

And the stern though beautiful features of the bride-elect were for a moment overclouded by an expression of dismay, while her full dark eyes gained fresh lustre from the tears that welled forth unbidden, and filled them, but did not fall.

It was a fearful shock.

"I am sure she is not," repeated my wife.

"How do you know? You have not seen her."

"No, but I saw the body. It was not hers."

"Whose then?" demanded the baronet's daughter.

"If not an entire stranger, it was Margery M'Anvil," replied my wife.

"But every one is agreed that it was Mrs.

—that it was her," exclaimed Miss Middleton, forgetting her grammar in her agitation.

"Yes," said my wife, "I know that I am quite alone in my opinion; but I could not rest until I had told you and warned you, Miss Middleton."

"Thank you, Mrs. Cochrane," returned the heiress, who had quite regained her usual composure—"thank you. If that is all you have to say, we may rejoin Louisa."

"I know you are angry with me," said my wife, trembling; "but I felt that it was my duty to tell you, and put you on your guard; and I felt that I could not rest until I had done so."

"I am sure it was very kind of you," replied the heiress, with irony. "We may now rejoin Miss St. Clair."

"No, thank you, Miss Middleton, I must return home. Good morning; and forgive me if I have caused you pain. I assure you, my motives—"

"Good morning, Mrs. Cochrane. I can quite appreciate your motives, I assure you. Show Mrs. Cochrane to her carriage"—this to the servant who appeared in answer to Miss Middleton's summons; and, with a stately curtsy, that lady quietly dismissed my wife, who reached home in such a state of agitation that I felt quite alarmed, and regretted I had not dissuaded her from going.

But who is always wise?

The general feeling throughout the county, relative to the marriage of its richest commoner's daughter, was not one of satisfaction; for it was felt that she was throwing herself away on a mere nobody, when she might have been an earl's bride at least, and have still further increased her family possessions and influence.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE first of July arrived, and witnessed the departure of Sir John and Miss Middleton for London, where the baronet had taken a house in Cromwell-road.

Our people were, not unnaturally, vexed with their landlord for his desertion of them at such a season; but Sir John could no longer neglect his new duties in Parliament, especially as the session was not likely to be prolonged beyond the last days of the month, and some important business, deeply affecting his native county, was before the House.

But we were none of us prepared for another departure—to wit, that of our

rector; who had, some time previously, announced his intention of preaching on the twelfth a sermon which should surpass all his previous efforts, and which was, consequently, looked forward to with much anxious expectation.

However, oblivious of his engagement at home, he accompanied his intended wife and father-in-law to England.

The twelfth, however, in spite, or perhaps I ought to say in consequence, of his defection, passed off much more quietly than any one had anticipated.

Our curate preached a very sensible sermon, I was told, for I was not present; and strove to instil into the minds of his congregation a little of that toleration of which they continually boasted, though they scarcely knew how to practise it.

Miss Middleton had signified to Louisa, who imparted the information to my wife, that it was her intention they should both be married on the same day, from the baronet's residence in London, and that the vicar of Moighrath was to be expressly invited over for the purpose of performing the ceremony; which, indeed, he afterwards did, although with some deviation from the original programme.

Robert had greater difficulty than he had at first anticipated in suiting himself with a practice, so that some time elapsed before he found what he was seeking; and Miss Middleton and her fiancé did not choose to wait so long, and were married without their friends.

We were fully prepared at Dumfarnghalee to hear of the rector's marriage at an early date; but still were somewhat surprised when the news was received within three months of his wife's funeral.

They were to have gone to Australia; but fortunately, as it turned out, changed their minds, and made a tour through France and Italy; and when I met them on their return, I was astonished at the change that had taken place in both, but notably in Charles.

I could scarcely bring myself to believe that he was the man I had known at Charlton-terrace and elsewhere.

Evidently, they had all along been intended for each other; and it was surely a malicious fate that had divided them all those years.

Yes, we Dumfarnghalites were astounded when the announcement of Miss Middle-

ton's marriage appeared in the *Pennyletter Post*, and the rest of the county papers. Many declared it to be a hoax; and, for my part, I felt half inclined to think it was an ill-timed joke, until I received a letter from the bridegroom himself, conveying the intelligence of his marriage, and also of his resignation of the living, which had been accepted by the bishop of the diocese.

Soon after his daughter's marriage, Sir John Middleton returned to Ardmore; where, by his special request, I paid him an early visit.

"I have sent for you, doctor," said the baronet, "not to consult you about my health, which, I am thankful to say, is excellent, but about my affairs, which perplex me a good deal."

I did not care to have such an honour thrust upon me, and made haste to say—

"Mr. Dobbie, Sir John—"

"Mr. Dobbie," interrupted the baronet, "is a capital man of business, and a very excellent fellow; but he is so matter-of-fact that I would as soon think of speaking to him about what I am going to lay before you as I would to the Bishop of Highshire himself."

"Well," I replied, smiling, "as you please, Sir John; it is not the first time I have acted as your father confessor."

"Just so," assented the baronet. "Of course, I know," he continued, "that Miss St. Clair will shortly become your sister-in-law; and I still feel so well inclined towards her that I purpose doubling the dowry she owes to my daughter's friendship."

The old gentleman laid a very marked emphasis on the last word, and continued—

"But I believe you have not another brother-in-law?"

"No," I replied, with difficulty restraining my inclination to laugh.

"Very good. As I said before, I think very highly of the St. Clair family—very highly indeed. The vicar is an excellent fellow, and if I were the bishop I would give him the very best living at my disposal. Lady Georgina, too, I admire very much; in fact, I may say I entertain for her the very highest regard. By the way, she must have been eminently handsome when she was younger."

"I dare say," I replied. "I think her second daughter very like her, Sir John."

He laughed, and said—

"I perceive you have made out what I

was driving at, doctor. Well, yes; I have not renounced my intention of marrying, if it was for no other purpose than just to prove to Mistress Mary that she is not quite so clever as she fancies herself to be."

"Is not that rather an unworthy motive, Sir John?"

"Perhaps it is, doctor; but you see she imagines she has overreached me, and put a final stop to my matrimonial projects. And so she did for a time; but, like younger men, I have outlived my disappointment, and fancy if—"

"If you cannot marry one sister, you might the other?"

"Just so," replied the baronet; and continued after a pause, "Augusta is certainly very young."

"About eighteen, I believe."

"Yes, between eighteen and nineteen; but she is very staid and womanly for her age. I'll drive over to the vicarage this very afternoon, and see what luck will attend me there this time."

"Do; but, let me tell you, I think your success is certain."

The baronet carried out his intention of visiting Moighrath, where he was most gushingly received by the Lady Georgina; who, upon the old gentleman making known to her the object of his visit, rose from her seat, and embracing him with fervour, precipitately left the room, exclaiming that she would send Augusta in to him directly.

That young lady, notwithstanding her predetermination to accept the baronet, was considerably taken aback when her ladyship came to announce the good fortune, honour, or whatever she called it, that awaited her—so much so, that she trembled, to use her mother's expression, like a leaf, and made Lady Georgina fear there was about to be a repetition of Louisa's fiasco; but Augusta was far too wise in her generation to dream of any such infatuated folly.

After a few minutes, the girl quite recovered herself, and proceeded, with a beating heart, but tranquil visage and resolute bearing, to the drawing-room, where the baronet stood awaiting her entrance in no small trepidation.

Augusta was, undoubtedly, a very pretty girl, and was, moreover, perfectly conscious of her attractions—too much so, perhaps—and knew how to display them to the best advantage; so that the baronet felt himself at once more in love than ever he had been

with her sister, and directly jumped to the conclusion that his was a hopeless case.

The young lady, however, was of a different opinion, and made her entrance with perfect composure. She even smiled encouragingly, as she gave her hand to her ancient admirer, who bowed over it with the diffidence of a schoolboy, and led her to the sofa with as much ceremony as if he had been a French dancing-master, but would not venture to seat himself by her side until she smilingly desired him to do so.

A pause—an awkward pause—of some seconds then ensued, which Sir John broke by saying, in a low, agitated tone of voice—

"Augusta, will you be angry with me if I venture to ask you to be my wife? I will make you as happy as I possibly can, and your every wish shall, if practicable, be gratified, not to say anticipated."

The girl looked up into his face with a mingled expression of boldness and bashfulness, and said—

"Thank you, Sir John; I am sure you will."

"Then you will marry me, Augusta? You are not afraid of my grey hairs?"

"Yes," she replied; "and as to your hair, we shall soon settle that for you, as mamma does hers."

Sir John was deeply enamoured of the girl's beauty, without doubt; but he was scarcely prepared to encounter so much self-possession and confidence in one so young, and it puzzled him. After all, perhaps, he was a trifle disappointed. We none of us like to gain too easy a victory, especially when we had taken pains to prepare for overcoming an expected resistance; and the course of true love, he remembered, is said to run not too smoothly.

"It shall be the study of my life, Augusta," he said, after a brief pause, "to make you happy, and please you on every point. I cannot, indeed, expect you to love me"—(with much emphasis on the verb)—"but I do hope you will learn to like me a little by and by."

"I like you very much now, Sir John," returned the damsel; "and if you are good to me, I don't see why I shouldn't love you."

As she looked up archly in his face, however, the baronet's courage revived again; and he ventured to press a kiss on her forehead, which was not resented if it was not returned.

"I think I must go now, and tell mamma;

and you must let me think it over by myself for a while."

"But you will be my wife?"

"Yes."

The baronet led his young fiancée to the door, and after bowing over and kissing her hand, allowed her to depart on her quest, returning himself to the drawing-room to wait further instructions.

After the lapse of a few minutes, his reflections were interrupted by the entrance of Lady Georgina, who once more embraced the baronet with effusion, as they say in France.

"I cannot tell you," she exclaimed, "Sir John, how happy this has made me. Augusta is such a dear, good girl, that I promise you you will never have to repent the step you have taken."

The baronet bowed low.

"Yes," continued the vicar's wife, "she will suit you better, Sir John, than ever poor dear Louisa would have done, who has no style, and no ambition, and is only fit to be the plodding, hardworking wife of a struggling professional man. Yes, indeed, although I am Augusta's mother, I can heartily congratulate you upon the wisdom of your choice—she is the dearest girl."

"I am sure she is," replied the baronet, with enthusiasm; "and dear Lady Georgina," he continued, "let me entreat you to obtain her consent to our marriage at the earliest opportunity. Old men, you know," he continued, with a sad smile, "cannot afford to lose much of the precious jewel time."

"Old!" cried her ladyship, in well-affected amazement—"old, Sir John! I am quite surprised to hear you apply such a word to yourself. I am sure you look quite as young as—my husband," she was going to say, but checked herself, and substituted—"many men who are not more than forty."

The baronet shook his head, and her ladyship continued—

"Well, well, Sir John, we must not fall out about that. I will speak to Augusta, and promise you that everything shall be arranged to your satisfaction, but you must let us have two or three months to prepare."

"As you please, Lady Georgina."

Augusta, however, most unaccountably, refused to be married for at least six months—she said a year at first, but yielded to the urgent entreaties of her parents so far as to diminish the baronet's period of probation by one-half; but she persisted in maintain-

ing that she must have her own way in the matter, and Sir John was at length compelled to agree to the vexatious delay, which the young lady would give no reason for desiring.

I suppose the baronet grew tired of the novel part he had to play in the tragedy-comedy he was enacting, for he returned to London, on the plea of urgent business, in a few weeks after his engagement to Augusta, to whom he wrote, and who wrote back to him, religiously twice a week.

Once or twice he endeavoured to obtain a mitigation of his sentence, but was reminded that the laws of the Medes and Persians were not more unchangeable than a young lady's fixed resolve.

THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES.*

AS a rule, how very little we know about Cuba. One recalls notices in tobacco-nists' windows; and that most pleasant of chatty essayists, Mr. Sala, once wrote an article concerning the Havana cigar manufactory. But, as he commenced his article in Venice, and delayed us some time while he discoursed about the appearance of a lady smoking at one of the windows, the knowledge that we obtained of the great Cuban produce was not absolutely perfect.

However, another traveller has come forward in the shape of Mr. Walter Goodman, artist in pen and pencil; and exceedingly pleasant is the account he gives us of his stay in this strange land.

It seems that he had one great advantage, in the fact of his fellow-traveller being a brother artist, and native of the island; an advantage soon shown in the way in which it acted as an introduction to what seems to have been the most sociable and hospitable place in the whole world. But it was not all smooth sailing, for there are certain little difficulties to be got over before a traveller is allowed to set foot upon the island.

First of all, there is the permit of disembarkation to be purchased—"tickets of admission," so to speak; and these are only available for one quarter's sojourn in the island. If he desire to stay for a longer period, the traveller must provide himself with a "habitation licence," to be obtained by a petition, supported by the consul of his

nation. Thus fortified, he may stay for five years; but he can neither leave the island nor remove from town to town without a pass. Worse still, he may not remove from one house to another without giving notice to the chief of police.

These are a few of the disagreeables, and hardly to be mentioned in comparison with the many pleasures that await the traveller; for it is a bright, cheery land, where the sun scorches, but where every arrangement is made to render the ardent monarch's attentions bearable. White rules the day: ladies in white muslin, gentlemen in white drill, houses glistening with whitewash, and the hottest portion of the twenty-four hours devoted to sleep.

Welcomed as the friend of a well-to-do native, our author found the hospitality almost burdensome; invitations were showered upon him sufficient to have occupied him for two years; at every turn, he and his friend found they had been forestalled. Proprietors of restaurants and cafés in the town had been instructed not to receive payment; the theatre was free, and even the haberdasher refused payment for his shirts. In fact, whatever they chose was placed at their disposal.

As a description of the houses in which these hospitable Creoles dwell, they are provided with an eye to earthquake, heavy rains, and excessive heat; one-storeyed, and containing very little furniture. As for the dormitories, their furniture is of the lightest and coolest; a light tresselled bed, that can be easily moved into a cool place, forms the principal object in the room.

It is not only the sun that the Cubans have to avoid, for it is considered fatal to sit under the rays of a Cuban moon; so, when that luminary is visible to any occupant of the balcony chosen for the enjoyment of the evening weed, his rocking-chair is immediately removed into the shade.

Very pleasant and chatty is our artist's description of Cuban life and scenery; he paints with a broad, vigorous hand, and for the time being the reader can easily imagine that he is in this pleasant land. Town and country are alike discoursed upon. Now he is busy in a Cuban studio, where models are plentiful; directly after, he is at a funeral ceremony, and here is the description of the proceedings:—"A procession, consisting of upwards of seventy mourners, follows on foot the richly gilded

* Henry S. King & Co., Cornhill.

and ornamented hearse. Everybody is attired in the deepest mourning, which, as fashions in Cuba go, includes a tall beaver hat, adorned with broad crape, a black cloth coat, and white trousers. The hired mutes, however, present a more sombre appearance, for not only are their habiliments black, but also their faces and bare hands; mutes in Cuba being represented by negroes of the darkest shade."

On entering the cathedral, and during the time that mass is being said, a portion of the mourners stay outside for a quiet smoke and chat; and afterwards, when the procession is re-formed, they merely continue their attentions to the cemetery gates.

Cuban policemen differ slightly from the well-known objects of our London streets, for their costume is a brown holland coat, trimmed with yellow braid and silver buttons. They wear Panama hats, and are armed with the extremities of two thousand years in the weapons they carry for destroying life—to wit, a short Roman sword and a Colt's revolver.

The country is described as very healthy—that is, if proper precautions are taken. We have already alluded to the heat of the sun and the power of the moon, supposed or real; but a dweller here must be strictly temperate. If so, he may hope to enjoy tolerable immunity from disease. There is, however, a malady that seems to be ever on the watch for the new-comer. Our author describes his attack. The physician comes and asks whether his head throbs without aching, whether he is troubled with certain pains in the joints and loins, and whether he feels altogether as if he had been confined for several weeks to his bed. He is astonished at the doctor's penetration, for he has exactly described his symptoms; but he does not give them a name, though he tells him that he will be perfectly well in six days. While pondering over this, a strange heat oppresses him, his head throbs, his pains increase, and everybody about him seems to dance furiously round his bed, ending by vanishing through the bars of his window, these being but the first fancies of his delirium. On the fifth day come utter prostration and inordinate thirst; this is followed by a sensation as of sea sickness and overpowering lassitude, accompanied by such feebleness that the patient is able neither to move nor speak; and now, for the first time glancing at his hands, he perceives that they are of a

saffron hue, and he wakes to the fact that he is down with the yellow fever.

The Cubans have their watering-places. La Socapa is one. There are no apartments to let at this favourite watering-place, and visitors hire a house and take their own furniture; neither are there bathing machines. But there are sharks. For amusement, visitors fish or shoot. From the adjacent woods, wild pigeons, partridges, quails, and guinea fowl abound; while for those whose ideas are more extensive, there are wild deer. One "favourite evening amusement is lobster hunting. For this sport a big barge is procured, and after having been furnished with carpets and rugs for the ladies' accommodation, we proceed to navigate the shores and creeks of the harbour. Three or four black fishermen accompany us, and bear long torches of wood, by the light of which the ground beneath the shallow water is visible. Our prey is secured by throwing a net, in the meshes of which the lobster becomes entangled; but should this prove ineffectual, a long pole forked at one end is thrust over the creature's hard back; and as he struggles to free himself from the pronged embrace, a nimble negro dives into the water and captures him alive."

Veritable negro minstrels are in Cuba as plentiful as blackberries; but as they never perform out of the island, their renown is purely local. Singing and dancing, however, are popular with the negroes and mulattoes, and the former is constantly to be heard at the tertulias, or evening gatherings. "One of the party accompanies himself on a guitar, or a primitive instrument formed out of a square box, upon which are arranged slips of flexible iron of different lengths and tones. Another has a strangely fashioned harp, made from a bent bamboo, to which a solitary string is attached."

They are lively people here in Cuba, with the bump of self-enjoyment most largely developed. Feasts are common, so are masquerades when carnival rules; and at this time of misrule, to quote the author's words, "everybody's house is everybody else's castle."

Mr. Goodman's descriptions are bright and sparkling, written in the chatty style which ensures readers. Here is getting-up time:—"It is the twenty-eighth of December, and the thermometer stands at eighty-five in the shade. I rise with the ganza grulla—our bird chronometer—that wonderful creature

of the crane species, with a yard of neck and two feet six of legs. Every morning, at six of the clock precisely, our grulla awakens us by half a dozen gurgling, metallic shrieks, in a tone loud enough to be heard by his Excellency the Governor, who is a sound sleeper, and lives in a big palace half a league from our studio. I descend from my Indian grass hammock, and don a suit of the flimsiest cashmere, in compliment to the winter month, and because there is still a taste of night air in the early morning."

Civilization has introduced its different pastimes in Cuba, where the people play billiards and cards, and know how to gamble. The theatre, too, has made itself a local habitation and a name. Moreover, there is some one who answers to our Lord Chamberlain, and licenses or forbids plays which have a political signification. Nature has her way, though, as well as art—for here we have tropical foliage; oranges, big as your head, are to be had for the picking; wondrous fruits, too; birds of dazzling hues, fire-flies, alligators and snakes, mosquitoes; and, going to bed, pleasant things like black star fishes, with round bodies—only poisonous spiders these, waiting to be eclipsed by scorpions, whose gentlest stings are worse than those of twenty wasps.

Coffee, tobacco, sugar—these are the principal cultivations, and from the last comes the white brandy or rum; and very brisk are the descriptions of the various estates, with accounts of stays at the planters' homes, where the young artist's colours and pencils at hand were always welcome. We give here, however, but a faint sketch of some of the leading incidents in Mr. Goodman's book, which abounds from end to end with pleasant descriptive matter and anecdote of a comparatively untried region. Let the reader of this obtain the work and read for himself, for there is not a dull page throughout, while many of the sketches of Cuban life are racy and humorous in these days, when humour is scarce, and seems to have almost died out, or been washed out like the seam of coals known as Wallsend. We congratulate Mr. Goodman on his power of observation, while we admire his manner of stringing these observations together, so as to make one of the lightest and most enticing works of travel published this season. It is strange, though, that another work on Cuba should have been issued at the same time and under the same title, by another. Mr.

King, however, claims the priority for Mr. Goodman's work, which was announced some months ago.

TABLE TALK.

WHO does not love the blessings of peace? Their names are few; but, all the same, it is impossible to agree with those peace lovers who, after their meeting, sent to ask Mr. Gladstone to contrive a settlement of the Ashantee war by treaty. An exceedingly nice party for a treaty is this same King, who lives at Kumasi, and whose reign ought to be shortened by the length of a head, for the benefit of black humanity.

HERE IS A temptation and also a disappointment for the curious. A rare and valuable work on Freemasonry has been published, containing the accepted ceremonies of craft Freemasonry as taught in all the master mason lodges of the ancient, free, and accepted masons of England. It contains the whole of the craft Masonic ceremonies, the opening and closing in the three degrees, questions to candidates before being passed and raised, the initiation, passing and raising, the tracing boards, &c., &c. Now, reading all this, of course one itches to get the work, and learn the whole of the much-coveted and ancient secret that so troubled the late lamented Mrs. Caudle; but, unfortunately, it seems that the manual is only for private circulation, *and none but Freemasons can really comprehend it.*

WHAT BECOMES of all the gold? It must stick very tightly to somebody's fingers. People seem as poor as ever; gold ornaments are for the most part merely electro, with the thinnest of thin films; and as for sovereigns—there, the subject is too painful. And yet we read of the enormous produce. The Australian colonies alone this year show, for eight months, over 6,000,000 sterling, and Queensland alone produces 210,000 ozs. per annum—in round numbers, about a quarter of a million. California, Africa, Russia, India, all play their part; and yet one sees but little more than one did thirty years ago. It is very easy to understand the City announcement, "Gold tight."

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, sent by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 3d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

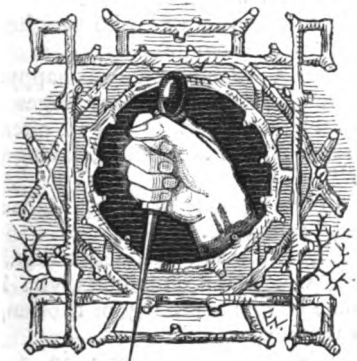
No. 306.

November 8, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XLVI.
BETWEEN LOVERS.



IT was a busy evening in Grosvenor-square, for Sir Richard and Lady Lawler were "at home." Carpet had been laid down over the steps, and awning fitted up by Aquila. Somebody, florist to the Royal Family, had sent covered vans and men, who had turned the hall and grand staircase into a conservatory of rich exotics. The confectioner's men, too, had been there busy enough. Cards of invitation had been issued, enough to fill the house again and again, from garret to basement; and people said it was not before it was time, for the Lawlers had been very tame of late. Rout seats were placed here and there; maids stationed behind refreshment tables; three extra waiters had been sent by the confectioner; and all bade fair to be a great success.

In the servants' hall, the party had been conducted with many a nod and wink—Mr. Sellars, whose opinion ruled on account of his grey hairs and position, saying that he might think this way and he might think that way; perhaps this party was in honour

of a making-it-up between Sir Richard and her ladyship, and perhaps it wasn't; all he'd got to say was, that he was very pleased to find things were going to be as they used to be.

James, footman, on the same afternoon, had taken advantage of Jane, nurse, on her descending to the lower regions, and placing his arm round her waist, again tried to steal a kiss—getting, instead of the kiss, a sounding smack on the ear, which sent forth a cloud of violet powder, and a request to know what he meant by such impudence. Whereat James, footman, said it was quite correct, for only half an hour before he had seen Sir Richard do so to her ladyship; Jane going off in a huff, with a request that Mr. James would keep his hands to himself for the future, and please recollect that she was engaged.

It was open house in the evening, and Mr. Sellars had himself ordered the big ale jack to be refilled and placed in the servants' hall, intimating that by and by there would be a glass or two of wine, and coffee, and what-not, to be added when the company was on the way. The livery servants fraternized with the waiters, and with the confectioner's men; the maids had on their new caps; and cook was dressed an hour earlier, for she would be at liberty. Jane and her aide were the only servants who had not much chance of mixing in the rejoicings below stairs; but Jane got over the difficulty by promising to give up her next Monday out to her aide, if she would take full charge of the child, and allow the said Jane to go downstairs.

The fact of it was that upon so joyous an occasion, when choice tit bits ad libitum would be on the way, several servants' friends had received hints to come, and amongst them Abram Higgs; and as the evening progressed there was not much difficulty of access down the area steps to the servants' hall and other parts of the house. The

milkman had found that out, and imbibed freely; so had the policeman on duty—though, of course, his visit below was only to see that all was right, and that no improper characters made their way into the house when there was so much plate lying about.

Visitors came, and visitors went; clustered on the stairs; squeezed into the hot rooms; stood in doorways; or listened to the singing of Madame Contraltino and Signor Sottovoce. The maids behind the tables dispensed refreshments, and the confectioner's waiters took matters very easily. Ladies' dresses were pierced by gentlemen's patent leather boots, and crush hats were waved, tucked under arms, and even sat upon by their owners. All went on prosperously above stairs; while below, the servants' friends picked chicken bones, sipped lukewarm ices, and partook of the remnants of the lobster salad.

Lady Lawler seemed in the highest spirits, receiving her guests, and Sir Richard all smiles.

As for Jane, after feasting her eyes by gazing over the bannisters at the ladies' dresses, she took one more glance at the sleeping boy; admonished her aide not to leave him for a moment; and then slipped down the back stairs, to be soon enjoying a tête-à-tête with Abram Higgs, to whom she confided the fact that Sir Richard and her ladyship had "made it up," and that all the troubles caused by those French people had blown over now for good. Sir Richard had been jealous, and no wonder, seeing how her ladyship had gone on; but that was all passed and gone now, and matters were all going smooth.

Here, as there were so many interruptions to the tête-à-tête, and nods, and winks, and remarks from ribald servants and waiters, Jane, seeing that her lover was very properly taking umbrage, and fearful of a disturbance, led him quietly to a back room on the ground floor, a place half study, half museum, where Sir Richard's fishing rods and guns were kept, in company with peculiar hats and garments worn in the chase. The said room had this night been devoted to the reception of odds and ends likely to be in the way of the guests; and being at the end of the passage, and dark, it formed a pleasant substitute for a grove for the lovers, who were soon continuing their tête-à-tête uninterrupted and alone.

Perhaps it was the darkness, and Jane could not see it; but certainly she did not flinch when by some means Abram Higgs' arm crept round her waist; neither did she shrink away when Abram drew her a little closer to him, and meditated a salute.

"And so Sir Richard and her ladyship's quite made it up, have they, eh?" said Higgs.

"Yes, quite now, and I'm glad of it," said Jane; "for the house has been awfully miserable lately."

"Then why don't we make it up more, Jane, dear?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Jane, innocently.

"Why don't we get married?"

"Oh, such nonsense! who ever heard of such a thing?" cried Jane.

"You see, we might be so happy. It would be so nice bringing my wages home every week; while as to now, I often says to myself, 'What's the good of having wages at all?'"

"Ah, there's plenty of time to talk about that yet," said Jane.

"I don't know so much about that," said Mr. Higgs. "All flesh is grass, you know, and some people make hay of it often, long before they expect it."

"What's that?" said Jane, in a sharp whisper, creeping closer to her lover.

"What's what?" said Abram, approving of the movement.

"I thought I heard something," said Jane.

"It was only my 'art beating responsive," said Abram, recalling a little of the last love scene he had witnessed at the Royal Soho Theatre.

"Don't talk stuff," said matter-of-fact Jane.

"Tisn't stuff, dear," said her lover. "Now, do name the day, and—"

"Oh!" whispered Jane, "I know there's some one in here listening. Let's go."

As she spoke, there was a faint rustling noise, and one of the weapons hung upon the wall seemed to have been touched.

"Let me have a go-in at him," whispered Abram, in the same tone. "It's one of them waiters—I see him watching us before."

"No, no—come away," said Jane, softly; and taking her swain's hand, she led him softly out of the room in the dark, closed the door, and then, watching their opportunity, they once more reached the servants'

hall; but to enjoy no further intercourse, for there were too many people about; and soon after, Jane declaring that she must return upstairs, Abram walked along the passages with her to the area door, in no very pleasant state of mind.

"I don't believe there was anybody up in that room," he said, gruffly.

"Ah, indeed there was," said Jane, trying to mollify him.

"Only us," he replied; "and you wanted to get rid of me."

"No, indeed, Abram. I heard some one moving as plainly as possible, and, of course, I wasn't going to stay to have everything we said listened to. When are you coming again?"

"I don't know," said Abram, gruffly.

"I don't see as it's much use my coming—you don't care; and when I do get here, all you think about's how to get me away again."

"It's a shame to talk so. I never treat you like that, dear."

That "dear" had the required effect, and the two parted the best of friends, after another appointment for an afternoon soon, Mr. Higgs announcing that it would be long before his duties would allow of another evening visit.

CHAPTER XLVII.

AN UNINVITED GUEST.

TWO hours had passed, and the last visitor departed. The confectioner's men had hastily collected together the relics of the refreshments; and along with soaked wafers, melted jellies, and heeltaps of negus and sticky jellies, the flowers and ornaments turned sickly and faded in the heat. Mr. Sellars had seen to his chamber candlesticks, and gone to bed; the maids had all, save her ladyship's, retired; the two livery servants had been asleep some time—one in a chair with his head in a corner, the other with his head stuck fast to the hall table.

Jane had reached the nursery region, to find the little boy awakened by the music, and now perfectly disinclined for sleep; the result being that his nurse had to amuse him as best she could, till the little thing condescended to drop off to sleep once again. And now, at last thoroughly weary, Jane stood thinking of bed, and also about the pressing invitations of Abram Higgs to marry. She stepped to the door and opened it, to listen whether all below had gone to

rest. All was quite dark and still, and she was about to close the nursery door and retire to rest, when she heard a door downstairs open and shut suddenly, and directly after a thrill of terror ran through her as she heard a faint scream.

For a few moments the girl stood irresolute; then, nerving herself with the idea that her mistress was ill, she ran across the landing to her ladyship's bed-room, and roused the maid, who was nodding in an easy chair.

"Here, Mrs. Henning—quick!" she cried, "her ladyship's ill."

"Where?" exclaimed the startled maid.

"In the lib'y, I think," cried Jane; and, with beating heart, she ran hurriedly downstairs, followed more slowly by the maid, who stopped short when she reached the first landing, and clung to the balustrade, afraid to descend farther.

Upon reaching the hall, voices could be heard, and the half-open library door showed Jane that she was right in her surmises.

Without pausing, she ran in, and then stopped, startled by the sight that met her gaze.

In front of her, supporting Lady Lawler, who had fainted, was her master, glancing fiercely at the squalid-looking form of the Frenchman, who, with raised and denunciatory hand, and his back to Jane, was speaking in a low, hissing whisper—

"It is as well, perhaps, that she cannot hear. Poor thing, I have no ill-feeling towards her; but as to you, you have earned my bitterest hate. I do not strike you now, because, with your coward hand, you would ring for the servants and the police. You would send me again to prison—the strong, victorious—once the weak. I cannot spare myself for prison, now—I have a task to perform. I came to-night, though, as I have said, determined to see you; and I am here to tell you that you have robbed me of all I loved. You have struck at me through the heart. So now, mind this: I have been innocent of all crime towards you. Your jealousy of that poor thing has been madness—suspicion of one pure as a child. But I will have revenge upon you. As you have struck at me through my tenderest feelings—as through you I have lost all I loved, so I will strike at you when you least expect. Sir Richard Lawler, *au revoir!*"

"No, no!—no, no!" shrieked Lady Lawler, who had heard the latter part of his

speech, and who now strove to escape from her husband's arm, and throw herself at their unwelcome visitor's feet. "No, no! I have been to blame for this, Monsieur Rivière."

"No, no! It is I, and I have said," he replied, turning coldly away, and before Sir Richard could well recover from his surprise the door had closed, and Lady Lawler was sobbing hysterically upon the breast of Jane.

"At last," cried Sir Richard, as one of the servants, sleepy and half stupefied, appeared at the door through which Rivière had passed a few moments before. "I have rung four times. Stop that man—fetch the police."

"What man, Sir Richard?" stammered the servant; and as he spoke the dull reverberation of the front door told that action was too late.

Resigning his wife to the maid, however, Sir Richard rushed out into the hall, tore open the door, and then dashed hatless into the square, to gaze up and down, to see nothing but the twinkling lamps; and feeling that any attempt at pursuit would be worse than folly, he returned to the library, to find that Lady Lawler was recovering, and hysterically explaining to the maid how that, just as they were about to retire, the door had opened, and Monsieur Rivière had appeared.

"His face was horrible, Jane," sobbed her ladyship. "Did you see it?"

"No, m' lady, his back was to me," said Jane; "but please don't take on."

"No, Jane, no—I'm better now; but how could he have got here?"

Jane thought of the noise she had heard in Sir Richard's room that evening; but she kept her own counsel. It was plain that any one who knew the house might have made a way in that night, and the scene was now ended by the entrance of Sir Richard, who bade the nurse help her mistress up to her bed-room, where he did not follow for some hours, but sat moodily in his study, wondering whether Rivière were but empty threats, or whether he should have to be prepared some day to battle with the Frenchman's revenge.

"Pooh!" ejaculated the baronet, at last. "What folly! The poor wretch can only have been out of prison for a few hours, and he is bitter and spiteful. That is all."

He went up to bed; but he could not make his mind so easy. Strange dreams

assailed him, and undefined terrors of the future; and at last he woke, trembling and beaded with sweat, to lie, thoughtful and anxious, wondering, in spite of himself, what form the Frenchman's revenge would take, and whether he ought in some way to be prepared. Should he once more set the law in force?

The answer came—No! The threats were not worthy of his notice.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

AGAIN.

SIR RICHARD LAWLER, when he ran out of his house, had not looked in the right direction, or he would have seen that Rivière, after stepping quickly down the steps, had not gone far before, anticipating pursuit, he had stepped into the shadow of a dark doorway, where he stood smiling bitterly as he saw Sir Richard come blundering out and run hurriedly past him, to stand staring up and down.

"Poor fool!" he muttered, as he saw the baronet turn back. "Bah! but he has no brains. He is a great boy."

Then he waited a few minutes, heard the door bang as Sir Richard re-entered, and merely stopping to roll up a cigarette, he stepped quietly out into the square once more, and sauntered thoughtfully along.

He seemed very calm and impassive now, and went straight on in an aimless fashion, apparently seeing nothing, till he encountered some wretched woman or another loitering about the corner of some street—a poor miserable, who, from being as dull and apathetic as himself, would on his approach commence humming softly the rag end of some popular ditty, as if her heart were so overflowing with gladness that this was the safety valve for getting rid of so much joy. Then, beneath some lamp-post, haggard eyes would gaze into eyes made more haggard with paint, and Rivière would pass on, shaking his head.

For quite two hours he sauntered thus about the West-end, never seeming to tire, and ever keeping to the main, well-lit streets. Cabs and late carriages passed him; and then the echoes of the streets would only be broken by the noisy, jolting rumble of some heavy-laden wagon, coming in from the country with its freshly cut vegetables for the morning's market, horses and driver looking of a sleepy sameness in the dim light.

Once or twice he sat down on a step to

rest, and lean his head upon his hand, evidently thinking deeply; but always, as if by instinct, choosing a step that was close to and well-lit by a lamp. Then, before arising, he would glance up and down the street in an uneasy way, as if he expected to see some one following him; but, as a rule, all was silent and deserted.

Rested somewhat, he would rise and go slowly on in the same restless manner, to pause now and then, and look up at a window where a light illumined the drawn blind, and flickering shadows told of sickness within, even as did the hurried messenger he saw in one street, who sharply crossed the road as if pursuing him, and made Rivière turn like a wild animal at bay. But the man passed on, and he saw him run down the next street, where a red, glowing eye shone out of the darkness, like a danger signal on the railroad of life, telling where lived the pointsman who might have it in his power to shunt the traveller on to the safe main line, or into that narrow siding whose end is death.

Rivière's heart beat more rapidly for a few moments till he saw where the messenger was bound. This sent his thoughts back to the room at Soho, where he painted in imagination the scene at Marie's sick couch, the attendant doctor, and Lemaire's importunities, till his fists involuntarily clenched, and he stood, with rugged brow, glaring before him into the night.

As the time passed, he grew more and more thoughtful, and his pace more slow. At times he quite halted, and more than one policeman turned to look upon him—P.C. some number or another, in his zeal, turning the shade of his bull's-eye so that the light flashed for a moment on the sallow, troubled face; but, as the stranger was moving on, he did no more.

It was singular, though, that on two occasions Rivière had no sooner turned a corner than a dark, lithe figure seemed to spring up, from no one could tell where, dart to the corner, and remain watching till the soft, slow footsteps died away.

This occurred again and again; but Rivière passed on through street after street, growing less cautious as he became more weary, choosing now, or involuntarily taking, the side streets in his devious way.

He had gone on like this for quite three hours, incessantly smoking cigarette after cigarette, which he rolled up occasionally

upon the doorsteps where he sat to rest; but at last nature showed symptoms of giving up, his pace became slower, and his pauses upon doorsteps more frequent, and each time of longer duration.

At last, in a dreary street off Tottenham-court-road, he sat down, after turning a corner, and tearing a leaf of paper from a little book, he slowly rolled up another cigarette. He had to collect the very dust out of his box to get a sufficiency of tobacco for this last one; and he sighed as he moistened the paper to make it adhere, for he knew that two or three hours must elapse before he could get a fresh supply of that which was to him now a solace in his miserable tramp.

"My faith!" he ejaculated, as he rose and took out another box to get a fusee; "but it is too bad—the last light has gone!"

What should he do? Climb to one of the lamps, and get a light? No, he could not do that—some one might pass with a lighted pipe. He had only to wait. But where was he?

He looked about, but did not recognize his whereabouts: one street, if dark and dingy, was so much like another; and he shook his head and walked on—stopped—thought. Why should he go any farther in this aimless way? He could not sit down and sleep—it was too wet and cold. No; here was an object. He would see if he could retrace his steps, street by street, to Grosvenor-square, where he could stand and think; and by that time it would be daylight, the sun would rise warm and bright, and the park was near, where he could go and seek out a retired spot, and sleep restfully upon the soft grass, and forget everything for a while.

It was very dark now, and very cold. The street was gloomy and silent; and, as he turned to go back, he shivered again and again with cold, and an instinctive nervous apprehension, which made him gaze anxiously up and down the street, and peer into the different doorways he passed.

If he had but had a light! It was so provoking, when he held that little cigar between his teeth. But it was hard—very hard—this life. Why had he not been left in peace in his own home? But what was this?

He had just turned the corner, on his way back into a street more gloomy and silent than that which he had left, and as he turned it was to become aware of a dark

figure crouching in the doorway of a house—knees drawn up, arms clutching them, and head resting on its breast. It was all plainly to be seen, for there was a lamp on the opposite side, which shot a few rays right into the doorway.

Rivière paused for a few moments, with all the suspicion of a hunted man; then, he was about to pass hurriedly away, but he saw something, half hidden by the figure's position, which made him stay. It was evidently a street-seller of matches, and that was his box, hugged up to his chest.

"He would give me one," thought Rivière. "I cannot buy; but the poor are generous to the poor. It is cruel to wake him; but he will forgive me."

He stepped to the doorway, and bending down, touched the crouching figure, which seemed thin and slight as that of a boy; but a heavy, stertorous breath was the only response.

"Will you give me one match?" said Rivière, in a low voice—"just one. I am like you, out in the streets for the night."

What followed was like magic; but quick as was the action, far quicker was thought, and with a flash Rivière knew that with all his caution he had deliberately stepped into a trap; for as he bent down, at one and the same moment a thin, nervous hand caught him by the throat, he became aware of a light step behind, and by the ray of the distant lamp he saw the flashing gleam of a small, keen blade, as it darted up, poising for a deadly blow.

CRACKING JOKES.

"AND as to the climate, it's all you can wish for. Eighty degrees by the sea shore, and seventy degrees farther inland, and sixty degrees as you ascend the slope of the mountain, and as you go higher fifty degrees, forty, thirty, and ever decreasing in temperature, till you get to the top, where it's so cold that you can't speak the truth. I know, for I've been there!"

So said Mr. Samuel Clemens, otherwise "Mark Twain," in his lecture at the Hanover-square Rooms, where for over an hour he kept his audience in a state varying from a gentle ripple to a loud storm of laughter, whose breakers rolled and dashed against the walls, to fall back in a very spray of mirth. For really, in these hard-working times, it is a profound treat to have the

risible faculties, which have so little exercise, moderately tickled and set going at the work they were intended to do.

Artemus Ward's was too short a stay among us. The physician who did so many of us great good could not heal himself, but passed away all too young. But he was a great pioneer, and led the way followed by several, not the least worthy of whom is Mark Twain, whose works have beguiled many a dreary hour. It is no uncommon thing, though, for an American author to mount the platform and "speak his piece;" and Mr. Clemens has given us a taste of his quality, though all too short.

The subject he chose was "Our Fellow-Savages of the Sandwich Islands;" and the lecturer—rather a slight, aquiline-featured, short man—came forward without pictorial aid, music, or introduction, to tell, in a quaint, dry manner, well spiced with the nasal twang, his adventures. He had come forward, he said, just to fill up the breach, in gratitude to the mother country for the generous way in which of late she has sent across the Atlantic all the lecturers she could spare. He then proceeded to describe the advantages of a trip to the Sandwich Islands, with as much earnestness as if he had been engaged as an emigration agent specially appointed by the Hawaiian Government. The audience were informed that the islands were twelve in number, and lay low down near the equator, though why they had been placed in such an out-of-the-way spot was more than he could understand; they were all of volcanic origin, constructed of lava, without so much as a spoonful of light dirt, and the largest was about seventy miles across; that eight were inhabited, four of the islands being remarkable for the fertility of their sugar plantations. In colour the natives were of a rich dark brown; but, observed the lecturer, with a pointed antithesis, they were not vicious. The women wore a single long loose gown; but the men didn't. The men wore a smile, and a pair of spectacles, and a little paint. In old times the king was owner of the entire land, was an individual combination of Church and State, and all offenders against him were placed under "taboo"—a word derived from the Hawaiian language. The chiefs were slaves to the king, others were slaves to the chiefs, and the women were slaves to all. It was death for a woman to sit at table with her

own husband. They were a rusty lot, observed the lecturer, in those old times ; but through American missionaries they had now become the best educated kingdom on the whole earth, and chiefly through the American school children, who had contributed their pennies. "I believe," observed Mr. Mark Twain, "I invested seven shillings altogether when I was a little boy in regenerating that nation." Their hospitality is boundless. They will bake dogs, cats, give you fish served with the scales on, and provide you with every other luxury of the season ; but the inhabitants are born traders, and the vendor of an article will lie from the first to the last. A molehill will be lied up into a mountain. Dogs are reared up as pets, and are then fed on vegetable food for the table. And ugly brutes these dogs are said to be—so ugly, in fact, that the only decent part about them is the tail ; and if one came into an American's possession, his first idea was to cut off the tail and throw the balance of the dog away. After which, in sentences brimming with dry, epigrammatic fun, he went on to describe the people and their habits ; the way in which, Black Country fashion, everything is made to give way to the pet dog of the Kanaka establishment ; how that beast is fed though all the rest go short ; made to ride on horse or in canoe, sleeps with his master ; is, in fact, the idol of the household, till he becomes plump and ready, when his fate is achieved—he is killed and eaten. Even the white man is said by the lecturer, after residence in the island, to get over his prejudice and become an eater of the vegetable-fed dog, which is, after all, declared to be only the familiar sausage with the mystery unveiled. The hospitality of the natives was then descanted upon, and their treatment of strangers in their luxurious, restful isles. The visitor might go to their huts, and be entertained by the Kanaka "with salt pork, with raw fish with the scales on, and with cats of any description you liked." Not tempting fare, perhaps ; but that which they considered the best. From droll description of serious things to serious description of droll things, the lecturer went on introducing anecdotes which were hardly needed, for the quaint periods were sufficient to convulse the audience with laughter, though not so much as the vestige of a smile appeared on the speaker's face.

It was a mistake, Mark Twain said, to

suppose that the Sandwich Islanders were cannibals. There was one cannibal there, but he came from south of the equator, and he ate a good many natives. He died of cap-tain in the stomach. There were 3,000 white people in the islands, mostly Americans, and a constitutional government had recently been formed. Mr. Twain gave a humorous account of this constitution. There were but a spoonful of people, and yet they had ministers of war, of the navy, of the finances, and princes and bishops ; and the worst of it all was, that all these people were highly paid.

Setting aside the inhabitants, though, for a while, he gave a humorous description of the fruit and natural history productions of the islands. He seems to have been a man who was always ready to see things from the comic side. Hence, he describes the native duck as a web-footed bird, who lived on the dry herbage of a mountain some thousand feet high, and which never saw any moisture until it rained, and then it was the first to seek shelter.

But in spite of the dry, caustic delivery, some of the descriptions of this lotus-eating land—where civilization has introduced, with its advantages, all the evils of habit and disease, so that the natives, originally four hundred thousand strong, are now reduced to one-eighth of that number, and threaten to become extinct—were glowing in the extreme ; for, as Mr. Clemens's works have shown, he is a word painter of no mean calibre. His voice was wanting in power, his diction in force ; but as he spoke, setting aside the humorous for a few sentences, there arose before the audience picture after picture of the gem-like isles, set in their verdant beauty in the midst of a silvery fringe of spray, low down near the equator, where the dawn comes unannounced, and where the day dies rapidly away to give place to soft nights, with great mellow stars burning like torches overhead ; where the sea is ever beauteous, whether sparkling in the sun or purple beneath the storm, and the inhabitants—simple children of nature—harmless and willing to learn as far as in them lies ; whose king is said to be a fine, noble, highly educated, polished gentleman "all over his outside," but at heart the simple, unadulterated savage. The land is fertile to an excess, its fruits beautiful, and the temperature the most delightful under the sun.

So much for Mark Twain's lecture ; but

it is only necessary to turn to his works to find them brimming over with fun. It is quite necessary that one's buttons should be fast before reading a book by this author. His "Jumping Frog," that was loaded with teaspoonfuls of shot, is well known; but many of his quaint descriptions are not so familiar. Here is one of a revolver, said to be "a reliable weapon, because if she did not get what she went after she would fetch something else. And so she did. She went after a deuce of spades nailed against a tree once, and fetched a mule standing about thirty yards to the left of it." The man who fired "did not want the mule; but the owner came out with a double-barrelled shot gun and persuaded him to buy it, anyhow."

In his travels at an out-of-the-way place, the hotel accommodation was found to be very bad. There were no towels, save a heavy, blue woollen shirt, and that was private. There were two scraps of glass in the frame, and from that frame "hung the half of a comb by a string; but if I had to describe that patriarch or die, I believe I would order some sample coffins. It had come down from Esau and Samson, and had been accumulating hairs ever since."

Mark Twain once bought a horse by auction. "In the afternoon," he says, "I brought the creature into the Plaza, and certain citizens held him by the head, and others by the tail, while I mounted him. As soon as they let go, he placed all his feet in a bunch together, lowered his back, and then suddenly arched it upward, and shot me straight into the air, a matter of three or four feet! I came as straight down again, lit in the saddle, went instantly up again, came down almost on the high pommel, shot up again, and came down on the horse's neck—all in the space of three or four seconds. Then he rose, and stood almost straight up on his hind feet; and I, clasping his lean neck desperately, slid back into the saddle and held on. He came down, and immediately hoisted his heels into the air, delivering a vicious kick at the sky, and stood on his fore feet; and then down he came once more, and began the original exercise of shooting me straight up again. The third time I went up, I heard a stranger say, 'Oh, don't he buck, though!' While I was up, somebody struck the horse a sounding thwack with a leather strap, and when I arrived again 'the horse' was not there."

Here is an anecdote from the "Far

West," illustrative of the wild state of affairs; but which must, of course, be taken with the customary grain of salt. At the time spoken of the Mormons would not mix or be at all friendly with the Gentiles; but it was noticed with surprise that the Irish servant of one American family could always obtain favours from the Mormon women when no one else could. "It was a mystery to everybody. But one day, as she was passing out at the door, a large bowie-knife dropped from under her apron, and when her mistress asked for an explanation, she observed that she was going out to 'borry a wash-tub from the Mormons!'"

By way of conclusion, here is the style in which Mark Twain can discourse on the appetites of camels:—"In Syria once, at the head waters of the Jordan, a camel took charge of my overcoat while the tents were being pitched, and examined it with a critical eye, all over, with as much interest as if he had an idea of getting one made like it; and then, after he was done figuring on it as an article of apparel, he began to contemplate it as an article of diet. He put his foot on it, and lifted one of the sleeves out with his teeth, and chewed and chewed at it, gradually taking it in, and all the while opening and closing his eyes in a kind of religious ecstasy, as if he had never tasted anything as good as an overcoat before in his life. Then he smacked his lips once or twice, and reached after the other sleeve. Next he tried the velvet collar, and smiled a smile of such contentment that it was plain to see that he regarded that as the daintiest thing about an overcoat. The tails went next, along with some percussion caps and cough candy, and some fig paste from Constantinople. And then my newspaper correspondence dropped out, and he took a chance in that—manuscript letters written for the home papers. But he was treading on dangerous ground now. He began to come across solid wisdom in those documents that was rather weighty on his stomach; and occasionally he would take a joke that would shake him up till it loosened his teeth. It was getting to be perilous times with him; but he held his grip with good courage and hopefully, till at last he began to stumble on statements that not even a camel could swallow with impunity. He began to gag and gasp, and his eyes to stand out, and his fore legs to spread, and in about a quarter of a minute he fell over as stiff as a carpenter's

work-bench, and died a death of indescribable agony. I went and pulled the manuscript out of his mouth, and found that the sensitive creature had choked to death on one of the mildest and gentlest statements of fact that I ever laid before a trusting public."

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER IX.

"Sublime tobacco! which from east to west
Cheers the tar's labour or the Turkman's rest;
Divine in hookahs, glorious in a pipe,
When tipp'd with amber, mellow, rich, and ripe."
Byron.

IT was one morning about a fortnight after the Brownsmiths' dinner party, that Captain Nolan, with his right hand grasping a bundle of letters, and his left thrust down to the bottom of his pocket, as if trying to find there the cash he so much needed, paced his library to and fro. From his knitted brow and troubled aspect, it was easy to see that in his thoughts he found no comfort. Happening to stumble against a footstool—one of those gins all womankind delight in setting in the thoroughfares of rooms—he stopped short, and, on regaining his perpendicular, exclaimed—

"Why the — should those scoundrels cheat a fellow out of his pipe?" Saying which, he resumed his vacant chair by the breakfast table, and drawing from its case an exquisitely carved Vienna meerschaum, proceeded to fill it with fragrant golden leaf.

Who does not know the soothing delights of smoke? As each silvery circlet curled upwards, it carried with it a load of trouble from off Captain Nolan's anxious brow. Surely a habit which produces such desirable results ought to be encouraged, not discountenanced, and especially by you, oh ladies! As your grandmothers coaxed and wheedled their husbands when in their after-dinner melting moods, so you, when the pipe of peace is being laid aside, come with your plea, "A new bonnet for the flower show;" or, "The doctor says the children must have change of air"—i.e., six weeks at a fashionable watering-place. Girls of the period, when your little bills are overdue, and you are sadly in need of cash, go to papa when comfortably settled down for a smoke; then, if a pretty penitent face, seen through the fragrant cloud, does not melt his heart, that man is more than mortal.

Philanthropic ladies, a word in your ear. Ye who walk about the world holding forth on the immorality of wasting money on tobacco, which to your idea might be so much more profitably spent on niggers, do not start when I tell you tobacco, if properly used, is your best ally. Produce your begging books, pounce down on your victims when smoke has softened their obdurate hearts, and your appeal will not be in vain.

In the meantime, Captain Nolan, carefully knocking the ashes from his pipe, and with a look of affection replacing it in its case, began to look over his letters. The first six he laid down, uttering the same monosyllable after each, "Dun"; then, taking up the seventh with the remark, "Ah, from my noble uncle," read as follows:—

"DEAR NOLAN—Sorry to hear you have come home. Think you are a fool for wishing to leave the army; if you do, your only chance is to marry an heiress. Nothing to be done with Government; could not get my own sons into a decent berth, so sent them all out to India, except the youngest, who enters a mercantile office, without premium, next month. Lady Charlotte and I will be glad to see you at Churchill, and introduce you to your cousins, when you are passing our way.—Yours ever,

"TUNBRIDGE."

"Pon my honor," thought Captain Nolan, "I do not know whether to be more offended or amused at this letter." Then, his easy-going nature getting the best of it, he broke into a laugh. "I must say it is an affectionate welcome to receive from your only relative on your return home; but there is a ring of honesty throughout the letter which I cannot help admiring. The man who tells you to your face he thinks you a fool is no humbug—ergo, when he asks you to his house, you know he means it. I am glad he has given me a straightforward answer. Many men would have shilly-shallied for months before owning they had no interest with Government. It is evident I can expect no help from that quarter, so must look elsewhere. I wonder how men do get these things? I know lots of fellows, much greater fools than myself, with first-rate appointments. It was only yesterday I saw that Williamson, who was unanimously voted the greatest duffer in the Punjab, had got a comfortable berth in England. Heaven only knows where he got his interest from!

But it is extraordinary what luck fools generally have; I suppose it must be to make up for their other deficiencies. Now, I must seriously think over my honoured uncle's advice, 'Your only chance is to marry an heiress.' Hang it! heiresses are not to be picked up every day; but, by the bye, there are two ready-made live ones in Heathfield at the present moment. People say old Brandy and Soda is worth millions; the fair Julia is his only child, and he told me himself he was willing to settle something handsome on her at once. Wonder if that good sum down would restore the old place again? She is tall, pretty, plenty of money. Mamma Brownsmith is certainly a drawback; but then a man does not marry his mother-in-law. There is no doubt that idiot, Neville, admires her very much; but I do not think she appreciates him. Why cannot I fall over head and ears in love, when it would all suit so well? Just like my miserable fate. When an eligible girl does come across my path, I cannot get up even a respectable show of flirtation."

Throwing himself back in his chair, he began cutting the *Times* viciously, till all at once he stopped. He was thinking of that other one now. She was her aunt's pet; he knew old Manning had no near relations; she must come in for Heathfield; she had always lived at the Hall; but he could not look on her as an heiress, it seemed so mercenary. No, it was nothing to do with money that made him like to have her to talk to. She understood all he had to say at once, without bothering him with questions. There was such a world of sympathy, such a nameless something, in her dark, sad eyes, as they looked into his troubled blue ones, that even as he sat there he felt their power. What was the good of stopping in the library, thinking of their beauty, when if he had his usual luck he might meet their owner? So catching up his hat and stick, he made off to Death's Hollow, as the most likely place to find her.

Stretching himself on the grass at the foot of the old oak, he mentally ran over his cruel fate. Here was he, with every personal attraction that man could want, hampered at every turn by the great curse of poverty.

The sole representative of an ancient line, he found himself possessed of a house ready to tumble about his ears, a grand piano with nobody to play on it, a rental

sufficient to keep him in boots, and his captaincy in the artillery. The latter did certainly just maintain him in India; but having been brought up in economical luxury, he knew it was totally impossible for him to live on his pay in England. Of this he had only been too painfully reminded that very morning by the six letters mentioned before, all duns for debts contracted during the first few years of his manhood, when with his battery in Ireland.

He had come home before his troop, with the avowed intention, if he failed in obtaining a home appointment, of exchanging into a battery going out. He felt truly ill-used by his forefathers. They might have left him a little; he did not want much—a mere matter of hundreds would satisfy him. He had no envy, hatred, or malice against any man; nay, he took a fatherly interest in his creditors. Like the walrus, he could deeply sympathize with their vain appeals; and had constantly told them that nothing on earth would give him greater pleasure than paying them, if only the money could be found. Indeed, so much did he hate being bothered by duns, that on leaving England, seven years ago, he swore never to contract another debt—a vow which had been rigidly kept; and he now felt aggrieved at what he called their base ingratitude in pouncing down on him, before he had been a month in the old country, with their paltry accounts, when he might have fleeced them with perfect ease for double the amount.

It seemed as if all the demons in the country were conspiring against him that morning; for, to add to his former troubles, there arose a new one. He had come out on purpose to see Agnes Lane, and he felt injured at her non-appearance.

Surely, she might have taken the trouble of walking down to Death's Hollow on the chance of meeting him? But of course she was just as fickle as the rest of womankind. It served him right for imagining he had found one perfect. There was no doubt his fate was very cruel. What was the good of wasting his time any longer here? He would have one more pipe and then go home.

"After all," soliloquized he, "what is a woman in comparison to a pipe, which you can keep always in your pocket, ever ready to administer to your comfort, and, above all things, have constantly under your eye."

But the gods decreed it otherwise.

Before Captain Nolan had time to bring

out his faithful meerschaum, the birches quivered above, there was a slight rustle, and the next instant his fate, cruel or otherwise, in the shape of Agnes Lane, stood at his feet.

It was difficult to tell if the deep blush that rose to her face was caused by the meeting him unexpectedly, or the gratification of a hidden wish. Coming forward, with shy eyes, she held out her hand, which he took with an aggrieved air and pathetic look. Seeing trouble plainly written on his brow, she was woman enough to endeavour to give a little comfort. She felt it was impossible to leave him now without trying at least to make him look less sad. Not knowing how to begin to console a man, she sat down silently by his side. He then commenced hacking at the poor oak's trunk, while she now and again stole furtive glances at his downcast face. At length, summoning up courage, she said, softly—

"Captain Nolan, is anything the matter?"

"Everything's the matter," growled he; still feeling offended that she had not come sooner, and snapping the blade of his knife in a last vigorous dig into the vitals of the oak.

A pause. Then, as if more than half afraid of her own voice—

"Can I do anything for you—is it anything I can help you in?"

Flinging his broken knife into the river, he turned, and propping his arm against the trunk of the tree, leaned his head on his hand, and looked down, straight into her tearful eyes, raised to his in mute appeal. Verily, the Palace of Truth dwells in the eyes. With their lids cast down, the lips may lie very respectably; but once raise truth's veil, and all words are vain in the face of eyes, which echo the heart's beatings before they take form in the mind.

When Captain Nolan looked into Agnes' eyes, he fancied he saw there more than her words expressed. He felt a thrill of pleasure at seeing those impassioned eyes filled with tears, and for him. Would she weep for him also? He would try; so saying—

"It seems selfish to trouble you with my miserable affairs," he gave her a mournful account of his solitary life and money troubles.

She listened attentively, drinking in every word that fell from his lips, and when at last he paused, said—

"Then you do not like India?"

"Like it! I hate the place. Every day that I pass in England shows me how intolerable it will be ever to return there again."

"Cannot you get something in England? you have interest."

"Interest is no good in these days," said he, gloomily. "No; I shall have to return to the old grind, where you may toil and work, and you get no thanks. You may be at death's door, and who really cares? Only the men below, who are expecting a step at your death. Not that I should be much better off in that respect in England; for God knows there is nobody here that my weal or woe could cause joy or sorrow to."

"Don't say such dreadful things," said Agnes, endeavouring to wink away her tears; "I am really very, very sorry for you."

Said he, edging a little nearer, and bending down his head until the end of his fair moustache touched her dark locks—

"No, you are not really sorry—you only think you are; for if you really were, I know what you would do."

"What?" said she, raising her truthful eyes to his, in eager expectation of his answer.

When Captain Nolan met her gaze, he felt a nameless dread, as the thought for the first time came across him that perhaps he was premature, and at one cast might lose all he had gained. He had hurried on too fast, under the conviction that he was already liked. No one who saw her open look could doubt for an instant that she was totally unconscious of the nature of his intended reply. He would have given anything at that moment to stave off his answer; but he had flung too many little pebbles to withhold the big one which must follow. So, with an anxious heart but firm voice, he said—

"You would throw your arms round me, and say you loved me;" then watched the effect of his somewhat abrupt speech.

She gazed for a second, as if hardly comprehending the purport of his words; then, turning from him, hid her crimson face in her hands, and tried to collect her confused senses. What had he said? How could she tell if she loved him, when such a thought had never once crossed her mind? Was it true, after all, and she had been loving this man unknown to herself?

She was not destined to remain long in

doubt, for a hoarse voice whispered in her ear—

"You see I *am* right; you are not really sorry." Then, bitterly, "Fool that I was to think for a moment that you could return the love of a miserable beggar like me; but I will annoy you no longer—India will be heaven to what you have made England now."

"Stay," sobbed Agnes, wildly stretching out her hands; and the next minute she was making acquaintance with the downy texture of that fair moustache.

"What will my aunt say?"

"I think she had better say nothing."

"How do you mean?"

"That there is no occasion for her to know yet." Then seeing her surprised face, he added, "You will understand why I ask this when I tell you my reasons. In the first place, I am not a particular favourite of Mrs. Manning's; in the second, though not owing much, my affairs are not exactly in a state to look well in the eyes of your friend the gentleman in black, who no doubt is a most inestimable character, but would throw in all his weight against me—his horizon, by reason of his profession, being bounded by £ s. d. So, you see, I start under great disadvantages, my pecuniary affairs not being such as to overcome your aunt's personal objection to me, and vice versâ. Besides all this, I have a rival of no mean pretensions—steady, highly respectable, with a good balance to his account at the bank, I should fancy."

"Who do you mean?"

"Mr. Græme."

Agnes smilingly shook her head, saying—

"You need not be afraid of him; it is only an idea of my aunt's. He is very fond of me, as a child to correct and pet; but nothing more."

"Then why is he always at the Hall?"

"He only comes about things that are wanted in the parish; there is always somebody wishing for blankets or dripping. Why, he and my aunt talk over all the old men and women in the village for hours together. I believe he really does like coming to see her. I tried to insinuate so once, but she either would not or could not see it. I wish they would make it up, for I should like him very much as an uncle."

"I echo your wish, for it might soften

their hearts towards us, and we could all be married the same day."

"What a sensation it would create in the neighbourhood!"

"But, my darling, joking apart, I am convinced, if I asked your aunt for her consent to our engagement now, I should be peremptorily refused; so if you will agree to say nothing just yet, but wait until I can settle with my creditors—which I hope to do soon—then, when there is no legitimate excuse for her to withhold her consent, I can come and demand you from her. A man cannot hold up his head with the millstone of debt hanging round his neck. You do not know, Agnes, how mortifying it is to me even to confess this to you; so I am sure, darling, you will not wish me to publish my miserable debts to the world."

"No, I want to help you, not to add to your trouble," said she, feeling the first shadow come across her new-found happiness, which, however, fled like a ghost at the first streak of dawn, as she raised her face from his shoulder and met his loving gaze.

VRAICKING.

"**V**RRAICKING!" you will repeat; "what can 'vraicking' mean?" And with good reason the question will be put, if you have never lived in the Channel Islands; for I have never heard the word used elsewhere. Now, turning to the French dictionary, we find the word "varech" given as the equivalent for "sea-weed;" and this, without much change—considering what Jersey or Guernsey French is like—becomes *vraic* in those dialects; whence, "to *vraic*" means "to reap the sea-weed;" and "vraicking" is the sea-weed harvest which takes place in Jersey at set times during four months of the year—March, April, May, and July—and which is no unimportant matter to the island folk. Therefore, if you will permit me, I will lay before you my adventures in an expedition of this kind last March, after having first given you a little account of the geography of the scene of our toils.

There lieth, know ye well, to the south of the island yclept Jersey, otherwise Jarsy and Jarzé, a bay—large, indeed, for the size of the whole land, but in the eyes of those who are accustomed to travel, of small dimensions, its whole length not exceeding three miles, and, to my mind, being somewhat less.

This little bay truly is called after a worthy saint, to wit, St. Clement, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, as I would fain suggest, seeing that the winds which disturb its waters, its sands, and, though last, I would by no means imply least, the garments of those who take their walks, commonly called their constitutions, in or near the bay during the six more wintry months of the year, are often none of the mildest; nay, rather, it seemeth unto me that they are not rarely gifted with much impulsive power. But let me not digress.

The tides in this region do rise and fall in a remarkable manner, now and then, when that which they call a *grande marée* is going on, subsiding to a distance of half a mile from the shore (though, indeed, as I was told, in other parts of the island the fall doth exceed three miles), and again coming up the same.

In the midst of this bay of St. Clement is a large expanse of sand, whereon human beings, when the same is under aqueous substance, do disport themselves, having made their appearance out of rude caravans, called by the natives bathing machines; or more simply still, they do throw off their garments, and hurriedly place them on the rocks; which done, they as hurriedly, or even more so, rush violently into the water, the braver ones quickly submerging their heads; but they of less courage standing shivering till propelled from behind by some one of their comrades. But beyond these sands lie certain rocks, covering a vast field; and about these rocks groweth that substance named in the vernacular *vraic*. It is now long, now short; and the law of the land giveth it time to come to its full; those periods which I have mentioned being the only ones in which it may be reaped.

So much for the geography of the place. And now for the manner of our *vraicking*. It was on a certain morning when March was still in that form wherein it has been not unaptly (as seemeth to me) compared unto a lion, when Maître Philippe M— came to my rooms, and suggested that, as I had expressed a wish to see what *vraicking* was like, I should go down with his party on that day. I was to be at his house at nine; or, better still, could I wait for him at the “slip” by which one gets from the road to the beach? I agreed to the latter, and my worthy friend departed with the usual “*à bi’nôté*,” which is

equivalent in these parts to “good-bye for the present.”

I proceeded at once to rig myself up in such old clothes as I could lay hands on, and was duly present on the “slip” at the appointed hour. There I had a view worth the going for. Dozens and dozens of carts passed me, each with its complement of men, women, and reaping instruments, the latter consisting of sickles, pitchforks, and four-pronged forks. After a while came Philippe’s cart, wherein were seated himself, his wife, and his mother, the last a dame advanced in years, who jabbered Jersey French by the yard, and at such a rate too!

I got in, and down we went, jolting over the “slip” and sands till we reached an artificial path through the rocks; and then the effect, in a cart innocent of springs and such-like easing adjuncts, over a roughly cut rock road, may be, as the newspapers say, better imagined than described. However, all troubles come to an end, and at last we arrived at the proper spot, and set to work at the reaping performance, the ladies rather going in for collecting the *vraic*, and filling the cart.

It was no joke, I can assure you, that bending down and hacking the sea-weed away from its bed; and it made one’s back ache pretty considerably. But the cart got to be full after a time; and then it was taken up by Philippe, whilst the ladies and I employed ourselves in collecting another lot, and placing it in a heap ready to be put into the cart as soon as the latter came back; not forgetting, I must allow, the demands of nature, but staying that vacuum which she abhors with cakes made of dough, sugar, milk and currants, and called *vraicking* cakes; and, let me tell you, their effect is very satisfying.

Thus we went on, only once interrupted by finding that Maître Jacques A—’s cart had stuck fast, and he wanted our help to get it out, a feat which we at last accomplished. We had sent up various loads, when the returning tide warned us to retire, and we walked back by the side of our final spoil, on the top of which were, in an erect position, the pitchforks of the day. The return was, as regards the procession of carts, a repetition of the morning, bar the fact that, whereas they had gone down empty, except their human load, they were now piled up with *vraic*, and the aforesaid human load

was making use of its natural instruments of locomotion.

As we came on our homeward way rejoicing, my good friend descanted on the merits of the *vraic* as manure, the purpose for which it is employed; whilst the old lady informed me that certain bulbs in the *vraic*, being boiled with rum, produce a certain mixture called *crise de vraic*, which is invaluable, applied externally, for chest complaints. So we proceeded; and I left my friends, being not a little pleased, and not a little wearied, with my first attempt at *vraicking*.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MRS. WOODWARD, as I must now call Sir John Middleton's daughter, had by her marriage placed it out of her power to direct or control, for a time at least, her father's motions; and it was not without some misgivings as to what might happen during her absence that she set out with her husband on their wedding tour.

In one sense things turned out better, in another much worse, than she had either hoped or feared.

Relieved from the incessant and irksome, although unobtrusive, surveillance to which he had been lately subjected, the baronet, as we have seen, lost no time in returning to Ireland; and it will be unnecessary to report what took place upon, or rather after, his arrival at the castle.

Whether or not the bride had gathered some inkling of what was going on at Ardmore from Louisa, with whom she maintained a regular correspondence, I cannot say; but the fact remains that our ex-rector and his newly married wife returned from their Continental travels a full three weeks sooner than they were expected; and the baronet no sooner heard of their arrival than he hurried back to London, with the intention, presumably, of preventing his daughter and son-in-law from coming to Ireland, or possibly to relieve himself from the supervision to which he knew he would be subjected by them there.

That the latter was, indeed, the true explanation of his motive in quitting Ardmore so very abruptly as he did may be gathered

from the fact that the Woodwards reached the castle on the day following the baronet's departure for London, to the no small chagrin of his daughter.

It had been tacitly agreed among the upper ten of the county that the ex-rector and his wife should not be visited. But—alas! for rash resolutions—on the very next day after their arrival, numerous visitors called at the castle; and before a month had elapsed Lady Georgina was the only person in the neighbourhood who had not either paid a visit or at least sent cards.

I cannot deny that I approved of the course taken by her ladyship, and would gladly have imitated it, as my wife advised, had my official position and my intimate acquaintance with Charles permitted my doing so; but I was not a free agent in the matter.

Charles and his wife arrived on the Tuesday, and next day I received an invitation, not to say a summons, to attend at the castle.

As I have said, I was surprised by the change effected in my friend's appearance and manner in the short space of time that had elapsed since we had last met and spoken to each other. He had discarded every outward symbol of his clerical profession; and, without affecting to personate a man of fashion, plainly enough intimidated by his dress and demeanour that his former assumption of the sacred office from which he had retired was a mistake.

Mrs. Woodward, too, I thought, was improved; if, indeed, improvement were possible where perfection in outward appearance had been as nearly reached already as perhaps it had ever been.

She was not exactly subdued in manner, but less overbearing than formerly; conveying the idea that she had reached the goal of all her hopes, and was thoroughly satisfied with the prize she had won. An air of calm contentment, of mild pity for others who were less fortunate, pervaded her manner, and sat gracefully upon her features, lending additional attractions to both; and forming a marked, and by no means undesirable, contrast to the eager, restless, and almost contemptuous bearing which had characterized her in former though not very distant days.

On the whole, the newly married couple seemed very well satisfied with each other; though perhaps sufficient time had scarcely

yet elapsed to admit of any serious disenchantment on either side.

As a matter of course, I tendered my congratulations, which were calmly received.

"How is Louisa?" was almost the first question asked me by my old friend's new wife. "I have, unfortunately, missed some of her letters; but I presume she is not married yet."

"No," I replied, "but I expect she soon will be. Robert has settled at last, in a promising neighbourhood, and is to come over shortly; after which the wedding is to take place as soon as possible."

"I am glad of that. I promised to be bridesmaid; but of course that cannot be now. However, I shall go to the wedding. Who is to perform the ceremony, did you hear?"

"Her father."

"Of course; I might have known that without asking you. Who is to give her away? If papa were here, he might."

"I suppose so," I replied, not knowing what else to say; for I was not very conversant with such matters.

"Or Charles might," continued the bride. And turning to her husband, she said, "You wouldn't mind, dear?"

"Not if you wish it, my love," he replied.

I had never heard him speak in so soft and mild a tone before, and could not help glancing at him to see if he were indeed the same man from whose harsh—not to say discordant—voice I had instinctively shrunk upon the occasion of my meeting him for the first time at Charlton-terrace.

Then disappointment had soured him, and brought into undue prominence the most repulsive features of his nature; now the responsive love and entire sympathy of a congenial heart had smoothed away, gilded over as it were, the roughnesses by which I had been offended.

"What was papa doing while he was over here by himself?" was Mrs. Woodward's next and very embarrassing question—"not getting into any fresh scrape, I hope?"

The baronet, it appeared, had not thought fit to acquaint his daughter with the important step he had in contemplation, and she had not been informed of it by Louisa or any one else. The situation was sufficiently embarrassing. What was I to do? Should I tell her, and perhaps cause differences between father and child? I decided to keep Sir John's secret; but I could not

tell an untruth, and had no alternative but to change the conversation, and try to look as unconscious as I could.

Happily, the arrival of a visitor put a stop to any further cross-examination, under which, I am sure, I must have broken down, and betrayed the secret—which after all, from the very nature of things, could not remain so long.

I suppose it was Louisa St. Clair who told her friend of the fact, but I am not sure, and would be sorry to affirm that it was; but the fact remains that she paid an early visit at the castle, though her father and mother held themselves aloof; and the next day brought me a note from Mrs. Woodward, upbraiding me with my treachery, as she was pleased to term it, in concealing from her such important news as her father's contemplated marriage with Augusta St. Clair.

The Woodwards only stayed a few weeks in Ireland before returning again to London; and left without waiting for Louisa's marriage, which did not take place until the week before Christmas, just three months after Miss Middleton had changed her name.

Sir John came over expressly to give the bride away; or, as Robert said, to see for himself how Augusta would look in her bridesmaid's attire.

Lady Georgina was present, in amber-coloured satin and ostrich feathers, and created quite a sensation as she entered the sacred edifice, where the ceremony was impressively performed by the vicar, assisted by the new curate from Dumfernaghalee.

I never saw either Louisa or her sister appear to such advantage as they did on that occasion, especially the former, whose lace veil and orange blossoms decidedly became her, as did also the subdued and quiet manner she had assumed.

"Can she regret her choice?" was a question I asked myself as I watched the bride elect, and marked her pensive air and downcast eye.

But no; the lively flush that suffused her face and neck, the bright smile that gave new life and animation to her features, as she caught Robert's admiring gaze, told that she regretted nothing, as, indeed, she had nothing to regret.

The baronet and Augusta, and my wife and I, signed the register as witnesses of the marriage; and, that important part of the proceedings over, we adjourned to the vicarage, where, as Lady Georgina ex-

pressed it, "a sumptuous déjeuner" was laid out.

A wedding breakfast, looked at from the most favourable point of view, is but a sorry affair after all, whereat the ladies fancy it incumbent upon them to shed copious tears, and the men to crack stale jokes.

On the occasion of which I write, however, the party was soon broken up, for the newly wedded pair were under the necessity of making an early start in order to catch the train for Dublin; and Sir John Middleton was also bound to reach London as quickly as might be, in time for the reassembling of the House after the Christmas holidays.

The baronet had vainly entreated his fiancée to consent to the marriage being dual; but Augusta, with a degree of stubborn pertinacity which no one who was acquainted with her usually facile and pliant disposition could have anticipated, positively refused. She had fixed it at six months, and in six months they should be married, or never.

Was she sorry for her obstinacy, when it was too late? Who can tell? She, at least, made no sign.

Robert's father and mother had both come down to be present at the marriage of their son; when some conversation had been held between Mr. M'Lachlan and the baronet which afterwards bore fruit.

As I have already mentioned, my father-in-law was an altered man. I had not seen him since my marriage; for although Mrs. M'Lachlan had paid us several visits, this was the first time her husband had been able to leave town, where he had recently resumed business on his own account, and was progressing as favourably as could be expected.

Lady Georgina was quite reconciled to her daughter's match—indeed, I may say, was proud of her handsome son-in-law; and when she had seen them established in their new home—where, thanks to Sir John's liberality, for he had carried out his intention of doubling Louisa's dowry, and thanks to Robert's practice, for which he was indebted to the baronet's daughter, they were enabled to live in very good style—her ladyship could not speak too often of "my daughter in London," especially after the untoward catastrophe which has yet to be chronicled.

The baronet's six months' probation was

almost at an end, and he had written to announce his arrival at such a date, while active preparations were being made to celebrate the nuptials on a scale becoming the position of the bridegroom and the beauty of the bride.

Augusta's trousseau surpassed everything of the sort that had ever been seen in High-shire, and produced an incalculable amount of envy in the breasts of the fair beholders.

The bride-elect wore her incipient honours with becoming ease, received the congratulations and presents of her friends and relatives as a matter of course; and in dignity, not to say pomposity, of manner equalled, if she did not surpass, her mother, the Lady Georgina.

Louisa was not to be present at the ceremony, for Robert could not very well quit his post in London, and his wife was too "new-fangled," as they say in Dumfries-shire, to leave him, even for the purpose of assisting at her sister's wedding, at which her presence was in no wise indispensable, or even necessary.

Sir John was expected to leave London on the Saturday before the wedding, which was to take place on Wednesday, and he could not reach Ardmore before Tuesday, as he objected to Sunday travelling, and Augusta had stipulated that he was not to arrive too soon.

On the Saturday, however, just as I was sitting down to breakfast, in rushed Mr. Dobbie, as pale as death, and visibly trembling.

"Eh, sir!" exclaimed the agent, "Sir John, puir, puir body! Who'd hae thought it?"

"What is the matter?" I asked, catching the agent's agitation; "is he dead, or what?"

"He's no dead," replied the agent, "but I'm feared he'll no be lang alive; for I've just got a telegram to say he's had a fit, an' is no expected. Eh, sir, but it's awfu'!"

"It is, indeed, terrible," I replied. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm just gawn till him, as quick's I can; and you're to come too, doctor, for he called for you; an' that was aboot the last word he spoke."

I looked at my wife.

"You must go, my dear," she said. "Poor old man!"

"What is to become of the dispensary in the meantime?" I asked.

"We must get Conway from Pennyletter

to look after it," replied Mr. Dobbie, who was gradually recovering from his excitement, and consequently dropping the use of his mother tongue.

"True," I returned, "he will do for a pinch. I suppose you'll be for making an early start?"

"This moment—at least, as soon as you are ready," replied the agent.

"My dear," I said to my wife, "will you get me a few things put together in a carpet-bag; for we must be off at once, if we are to reach Dublin in time to catch the Holyhead steamer this evening."

"It will be better to go by Banntown," suggested Mr. Dobbie. "I'm certain we never could get to Dublin to-night, and the boat goes from the Bann at four."

"An awful sea passage!" I said.

"So it is; but it will be the shortest in the end," replied the agent.

In five minutes I was ready, and we were on our way. It was a beautiful morning, unusually mild for the end of March; but we were both of us too much preoccupied with our own thoughts to take any notice of the weather or the familiar scenery around.

"Do you know where the Woodwards are?" I asked the agent, after we had driven a couple of miles in silence.

"They are with Sir John in Cromwell-road," replied Mr. Dobbie. "It was Mr. Woodward who sent me the telegraphic message."

Nothing more was said for some time, and at last we reached Pennyletter, where a few minutes—ten at most—served us to requisition a car with a fast horse, that took us into Banntown at steam-pace.

We just secured the boat for the nearest English port, and after a stormy passage, during which we both suffered severely, Mr. Dobbie and myself took our places in an express train to London.

I had a presentiment that we should be too late; but I was wrong. Sir John was alive and conscious, but incapable of moving hand or foot; while the only word he could speak was "No," even when he intended to say "Yes."

I saw by the expression of his eyes that he knew and was glad to see me, although two physicians were in regular attendance.

"I am truly sorry, Sir John," I said, as I pressed the passive hand, "to see you so ill; but I trust you will soon be better."

"No, no; no, no, no," cried the baronet, while the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Can I do anything for you, Sir John?"

"No, no, no."

But this time, instead of shaking his head, the poor stricken creature nodded it several times.

I looked appealingly at his daughter, who was present.

"He means to say 'Yes,' I think," she answered.

It was evident he did.

"What is it, Sir John?" I again inquired.

Once more the same words and motions were repeated, and a thought struck me that perhaps he wished to see some one—who, I could guess; but how speak of her before Mrs. Woodward?

"Is Charles in the house?" I asked, in hopes of drawing that lady's attention from her father.

"Yes," she replied; "would you like to see him?"

"Very much," I replied, "if you will kindly send, or go for him."

"I will go for him—he is in the library, with Mr. Dobbie."

"Thank you."

It was exactly what I wanted. The moment Mrs. Woodward had left the room, I stooped down and whispered in the poor old man's ear, but still keeping my eyes fixed upon his face—

"Do you wish to see Miss St. Clair, Sir John?"

The answer, "No, no, no," spoken loudly, and accompanied by three decided shakes of the head, convinced me that I was wrong in my conjecture.

"Is it about your will?" I asked, as the thought occurred to me that he might possibly wish to give some instruction concerning the disposal of his property.

He nodded his head affirmatively, and cried vehemently—

"No, no, no."

"Have you made it, Sir John?"

Once more he nodded his head, and directly afterwards shook it, repeating all the while his most distressing cry; from which I concluded that the will was drawn up, but had not received his signature; and I asked him if it were so.

Again I gathered from his answer that I was right; but what more could be done? It was but too evident that he could not sign it then; and even if he could, and did, the

will would probably be set aside, or if not, would certainly give rise to expensive litigation. It was a pity, but there was no help for it—the poor old man must die intestate, after all.

I told him so, but he dissented from my opinion as forcibly as he could. The scene was painful in the extreme, and was fortunately terminated by the entrance of his daughter, who informed me that her husband had gone out with Mr. Dobbie, but would probably soon return.

It was no time for indulging in gossiping conversation; and I sat by the bedside for some minutes in silence, with the baronet's hand in mine, while Mrs. Woodward sat somewhat apart.

After an interval of silence that lasted, I think, quite half an hour, and which was scarcely broken by the deep breathing of the invalid, the bed-room door was noiselessly opened by a servant, who announced the two physicians.

I have no doubt my rustic attire gave me an unprofessional air, for neither of the newcomers took the slightest notice of me, nor did Mrs. Woodward introduce me; but the baronet, glancing alternately at us all, kept up an incessant volley of "No, no, no," accompanied by violent movements of his head, which at length attracted the notice of one of the physicians.

"You must compose yourself, my poor friend," remarked that gentleman, in his bland and unctuous voice, "you must really compose yourself."

"I think, gentlemen," I ventured to say, "that Sir John wishes to inform you that I am his medical attendant in the country."

Whereupon the baronet nodded his head, and repeated, "No, no, no," in a satisfied tone.

"Happy to make your acquaintance, I am sure," blandly remarked the Court physician. "Doctor—ah?"

"Cochrane."

"Dr. Cochrane. Our poor friend seems rather weaker to-day. Do you not think so?"

"I have only just arrived, and have not seen him before since the seizure."

"Very true."

The usual questions were then put by both gentlemen to the attendants; and having satisfied themselves as to the exact condition of their patient, the physicians took their departure.

I gathered from the baronet's manner that he wanted something. What it was I could not make out, though I taxed my ingenuity to the utmost; and my stupidity provoked an astonishing amount of irritation in the sick man, who shouted and raved until he was almost completely exhausted.

At last, just as I feared he would work himself into another fit, I discovered that he wished to see his agent.

Mr. Dobbie was accordingly sent for, and soon made his appearance by Sir John's bedside, but failed entirely to understand what the poor man wanted of him; neither could I make out exactly what he wished. I suspected, indeed, that it was relative to the unfinished will; but I feared to allude to so delicate a subject in the presence of Mrs. Woodward.

Perceiving that the invalid was rapidly growing weaker, I persuaded him, not without difficulty, to allow the agent to retire for the present, which at length he consented to do, and almost directly fell into a heavy sleep, which gradually changed to coma; and before morning dawned my poor old friend had passed almost insensibly to his rest.

The sad and unexpected death of Sir John Middleton caused great and universal sorrow in Highshire, and in no part of it more than in Moighrath Vicarage, where Lady Georgina went into the deepest mourning, which was probably the reason Augusta "obstinately," as her mother said, "refused to don sable attire."

"Yes, she ought to have put on widow's weeds," cried her indignant ladyship; "and there she is, flaunting about in every colour of the rainbow, as if nothing had happened. I am perfectly ashamed of her."

Possibly, in her heart of hearts, the girl felt it was a relief; but she confided the real nature of her feelings to no one; and, after all these years, is yet unmarried, although she has had several eligible offers.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

IN TERRA DEL FUEGO, SURREY.

HOW many years is it since we saved up for weeks every penny we could scrape together to buy squibs and crackers for the 5th of November, and also bought a whole pound of powder, and turned ourselves into sweeps, while powdering charcoal to make a golden rain? Perhaps it is as

well not to reckon, but, all the same, there were never such fireworks as those made before or since. Of course, that is and was our private opinion, and has nothing to do with Mr. Brock's manufactory, where we are standing this soppy wet day, ready for a tour of inspection to see how fireworks are made.

Most people must know these works, almost as well as they know the glorious blazes of colour that are produced at the Crystal Palace. They consist of those five and twenty lightly built sheds standing in a seven-acre field—wooden sheds, save one, which is of brick; and, while by law the sheds are five and twenty yards apart for safety's sake in case of explosion or fire, this one brick building, which we approach with fear and trembling, is fifty yards from its neighbours; and, on the door being opened, we go inside to stand amongst a lot of little barrels, every one of which contains enough gunpowder to blow the building down, and scatter us in fragments all over the place.

There is not much to be seen here in this powder magazine; but it is the abode of the genie—the slave of the firework-maker, for this plain gunpowder is the active principle in many of the glorious *feux de joie* which are here prepared; and knowing, as we do, its awful power, it is with a feeling of calm satisfaction that we see the little kegs disappear behind the closing door, and breathe once more freely the open air untainted with the smell of the “villainous saltpetre.”

Passing then from the powder magazine, we crossed to a shed where the other constituents of the fireworks were kept, to see them stored away in open tubs and great jars—curious chemicals, won from nature by the study of many years, and each possessing its peculiar property of giving a tint to burning flame. Here in this tub was a sort of sparkling black powder—antimony—for giving a white light or pale blue; in another tub realgar, a rich orange sulphuret of arsenic; and by its side yellow orpiment, another combination of the deadly poison with sulphur, and, like its relative, useful for making a brilliant pale flame; in the next tanks familiar flower of brimstone or sulphur, and next snowy potash or saltpetre. In these jars are inoffensive-looking salts—this, strontia, which will burn of a ruby red; that, baryta, which will turn a flame emerald green; salts of copper for sapphire blue: cunning preparations one

and all, which, when manipulated, have gladdened the eyes of thousands.

In the next shed we see women and girls busy with paper and paste brush, rolling paper pipes or cylinders for rocket, squib, and Roman candle, which when dried are light and hard, and ready for “choking”—that is, to have one end closed in. They are of all sizes, from the tiny halfpenny squib to the great blue light which blazes for many minutes. But this is a very simple manufacture, and from here we go to another store, where paper and wood predominate. Ready-made cases, sheaves of rocket sticks, reams of paper, and half shells, like the papier mâché imitations of large half oranges with the pulp scooped out. Here, too, are wooden wheels of all kinds, carefully turned, and fitted ready even with an iron pin upon which they are to revolve, but harmless—lifeless, one and all, for they are not charged or primed with those loaded cases, whose blue touch-paper, twisted up so neatly, seems to ask a light.

One of the great features of the firework-maker is the star, and this he introduces in nearly every beautiful work of his art: his Roman candle throws up stars, his rocket bursts and scatters stars of many tints, and the papier mâché shells which we saw empty are filled with stars, and sent on high from mortars, when they explode, and down falls a rain of the brilliant gems. This being the case, then, we go to a shed where a grimy boy is busy over a tray of composition—a mixture of chemicals in a state of moisture, and this he attacks with a little implement, something like the mould with which a cook will cut out ornaments from paste; but this implement is provided with a piston, and as the boy chokes it with composition, the little piston rod forces the plug out, just a tiny pill-box shaped piece of the hardened compressed material; and the lad, quick at his work, soon fills a tray with these little pellets, which goes with many more to a drying house, where they all stand round the hot-water heated place, and grow dry and hard, ready for busy-fingered girls to wrap paper cases round them, and paste them to make them firm. And these are stars—latent, glowing gems—that only need to be fired by the meal powder of their shell or rocket, to burst forth in jewelled splendour upon the eye.

Going to another shed, we see the dry stars ready for use. Two of the paper

shells have been turned into one complete sphere by glueing canvas round the edges; but a round hole is left, and into this—according to the size of the shells, which run from three to sixteen inches in diameter—dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of stars are poured. Then these are primed with powder, and have a cartridge attached ready for firing from a mortar, to burst in air.

So much for the shells, and we go on to the rocket shed, where men are busy with case, rammer, composition, mallet and spoon. A core of wood is left up the centre of these cases as the composition is placed in, and they are rammed hollow, so that in a finished rocket there is a hole right up the centre of the charge, to where, in a chamber at the top, lie a dozen or two of stars ready to light when the rocket has shot up with its trailing stick, burnt out its train of fire, and burst in a glory of many hues.

Again, here are men charging blue lights, great heavy fireworks, into which the blackened dingy composition powder is driven with great force till it becomes almost solid, and is finished off with a layer of clay, to keep all safe where the priming of meal gunpowder is placed. Similar is the process by which the Roman candle is prepared; but here stars are required, and if we watch the man, he places in first, with a tiny measuring spoon, a charge of gunpowder on which is placed a star, then comes so much burning composition, well rammed down, next more gunpowder—meal powder it is called here when ground fine—another star, more composition, and so on, with red, blue, green, or white stars for variety, till the top of the case is reached, the whole being done by rule and graduated scale of amount of powder, &c., learned only by constant practice.

The firework-maker has his tools. More than once a spoon has been mentioned, but this is not the little implement with which Mrs. Perkins would stir up her tea, but a little circular dipper or measure, which holds the exact quantity of the chemicals required—chemicals indeed, for your modern firework-maker is a chemist in a large way, and is ever on the experimental watch for new combinations and shades of colour. As to being in a large way, here is a little fact, that at the display a few days since, on the occasion of Mr. Brock's benefit, about three tons of composition of one kind and another were burnt.

It was a busy season at our visit, and a long way on to a hundred employes were at work, for the time was fast approaching when the feast of the renowned Guido Fawkes was to be held, and not only were dealers to be supplied, but orders had to be made up for schools in different parts of the country; for a large and extended business is done here at Nunhead. In fact, if the Sultan of Turkey or the Pasha of Egypt wants what schoolboys call a good flare-up, he sends here, and shells, rockets, and set pieces go out, perhaps under the care of the maker himself, for the delectation of the Osmanli.

There is plenty to be seen, though, yet, for here are boys filling the immortal squib, looking the while like half of the ten little niggers of the song. Their business, too, was also—imps that they were—that of making blue devils, so called, because they are not blue, but only a larger kind of squib with a glorious bang; and the boys seemed to ram away and ladle in the black, grimy composition with genuine pleasure, previous to these same filled cases going to another or finishing shed, where they are covered with white paper and tipped with blue by deft-fingered maidens, who twist on this blue touch paper, and then tie it securely on with red twine in a nimble way that the eye can scarcely follow. Before the looker-on could see how it was done, a dozen squibs would be knitted on to a piece of string, and put aside, to make place for another dozen, and another, till heaps of dozens were lying ready to be borne off to a fresh shed, for finishing and packing.

It is to this care in isolating the different processes that the workpeople owe the immunity they enjoy from accident, though the obliging manager who took us round explained that, in the event of fire, there could be no explosion, only the rapid combustion of the made-up and unfinished fireworks.

But there was the finishing shed yet to be seen, where the tied-up fireworks came; and here were busy men ornamenting the outer cases with coloured paper, tying them up in bundles, attaching rockets to sticks, Roman candles to frames, so as to form bouquets; and to every separate firework was fastened a label containing simple instructions for letting off, while to each wheel was also fixed a screw or pin upon which it should revolve. What a pile of quiescent glories! It was enough to make one feel

boyish again, and long for those good old times when it was the height of bravery in one's own estimation to hold a squib in one's hand until it gave its concluding pop, or to bear a squibbing without a murmur. On every side were piled up the neat cylinders and wheels, fascies, and great bundles—though these were but a portion of the finished articles; the manufacturer, for safety's sake, having stores at Barking, on the river, where a couple of barges are moored for that purpose. But, all the same, there are rockets here that it must require nerve to fire—great fellows, with conical tops, that might be used for the Ashantee war if bullets were substituted for the stars, and magnesium lights, and parachutes which they are destined to bear aloft. In fact, with the exception of the charge in the head, size is the only distinction between the rocket of the feu-de-joie and that used in war. The usage is different, though; for while the sightseer's rocket is trained for ascent, that which is to send alarm and destruction into hostile ranks is fired horizontally from a tube.

One peculiar feature here is the manufacture of slow and quick match, which is made by steeping the match in charcoal and petroleum. This is made by the hundred yards, and is used to form communications between the various cases of a set piece, going off with the rapidity of lightning, and acting to the various parts of a firework like an electric telegraph wire, if enclosed in a paper case, but burning slowly in the open air.

And now, not a tithe of the contents of the various sheds has been described. Nothing has been said concerning the women cutting out gores and pasting them up for paper balloons; nothing about the pieces of scaffold-like woodwork lying about, ready for trimming with charged cases, for some set piece of display; nothing of the great iron mortars which send aloft the shells; for one visit does not suffice. Secrecy there is none, save the knowledge of the combinations of chemicals, and that appertains to the master-brains that direct the whole, to produce results before which the much-vaunted glories of old Vauxhall were as nothing.

In fact, to repeat a true saying, we live in an age of progress, whose magic wand has been busy with everything, not the least or last being the combustibles which were such a pleasurable terror in our youth.

TABLE TALK.

IF ever our new Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster should think it advisable to alter his crest or arms, he might require a motto to place on or beneath his shield—for Quakers can and do fight. If, then, he should, here it is—and, if he take good advice, he will eschew French or Latin, and let it stand in plain English: "Always Bright."

IT WAS NOT to be expected that a new American firm would let the sturdy old *Times* get the better of it. Some years ago the newspaper world was agog with deserved admiration of the great Hoe cylinder printing machine; but last year a step in advance was publicly shown in the Exhibition, where the new Walter machine printed part of the *Times*. The great improvement in it was this: that instead of the sheets being laid on slowly, one by one by hand, the paper was placed in the machine in one great roll, which ran off as it was printed, and was cut off in sheet lengths on the other side. That popular paper, *Lloyd's News*, has now been furnished by Messrs. Hoe with a machine possessing similar capabilities, a roll of paper four miles and a half long being introduced; and two such rolls, or nine miles, are consumed in an hour, forming 20,000 complete newspapers for the eager reading public.

MANY READERS will remember Old Saint Giles's, and the dens that existed before the clean cut through was made to form New Oxford-street. The general idea is that a razing like this gets rid of a horrible rookery; but, unfortunately, the rooks collect again elsewhere. The following extract is from a report by Dr. Ross, the medical officer in whose district lies the southern portion of St. Giles's:—"Tramps, wife deserters, beggars, pickpockets, and women of bad repute occupy the common lodging-houses in this quarter. There are more than 2,000 of these persons, the large majority of whom are single, or at least live as celibates. They are, nevertheless, prolific. A considerable amount of the sickness and mortality in St. Giles's, and a large proportion of the cost for supporting its pauperism, are caused by the occupants of these houses. These lodging-houses are, moreover, the seething hotbeds of depravity and crime; and being adjacent to the habitations of the lowest class of our

labouring poor, the indecent and immoral habits of the population infect whole streets, and cast a gloomy shadow of squalor and vice over the whole locality." Can nothing be done in the way of cleansing? One person of evil repute is bad enough in a district; but this one multiplied by two thousand, and these two thousand looked upon as the germs from which myriads may spring, afford a picture not pleasant to dwell upon in these enlightened days.

THE BIRDS OUGHT to sing now that there is an act for their protection; but really it was time, not for them to sing, but to be protected. "Who killed cock robin?" says the nursery rhyme. It might have been the sparrow in old days, but of late it has been the bird-catcher, to supply the trimmings for ladies' dresses. Fancy the fair creature whose dress was trimmed with the plumes "of 500 of these little birds," offerings every one of them at the shrine of the great goddess Fashion! Cannot this reigning queen be induced to promote a fashion that would benefit society at large, setting aside birds? Suppose something were done with insects, so as to make them scarce—a hair wash of flies, or a decoction of the noxious nameless ones for colouring purposes; or, better still, something in animals—mouse-skin jackets, or a mantle de la peau de rat. They would be soft and warm, and could easily bear another name.

"I'LL SING YOU a song without any flam," says the old song, suggesting itself as one comes across an advertisement of a cork leg for sale—"Left; little used; first-class make; suit man 5ft. 9in.; lowest price, £3." Who wants one? Might he have it on trial? If so, might he test it in a limited space, with friends at hand in case of danger? This might be the original cork leg, which kept going day and night. But, no fear! the advertisement gives the price of £3 for this left leg; and, taking warning, the seller would see that the tryer-on did not get out of sight, having in his mind the fate of the original's maker, who "never was paid and it served him right." Three pounds are three pounds in England, whatever they may have been in Rotterdam.

IF 1,200 NEWSPAPERS recommend the use of Macniven and Cameron's pens, surely one magazine may follow suit, and speak in

praise of the makers who have contrived by various cunning devices to get over the stiff elasticity, so to speak, of steel. One has one's own peculiar notions about pens— notions shared in by all who write by the mill, and whose busy thoughts have to flow in liquidity down the slit formed by two nibs. One's quill days are over, unless one could afford to keep a maker and mender; for though quills have still a large sale, they belong to the stage-coach days, whilst the steel pen appertains to the railway and telegraphic times. The Owl pen is a fine quill in modern disguise; the Phaeton, with its turn-up nibs, gives ease in writing in excelsis; and the Pickwick is pleasant enough to inspire a novel of its name. The Waverley seems even to leave the foregoing in the shade, and would have enabled Scott the Great to have achieved more than he did, for it travels with lightning speed over even coarse paper; the Broad-arrow does not tempt us with its flight, neither does the Waverley Barrel, though for hard work it would doubtless be admirable. Testing them again, commend us to the Phaeton, and after a fair trial we can honestly say they are amongst the best pens we ever used.

WILL SOME COMPANY take up the question of *laying on*? These are days of improved civilization: we have water and gas laid on, why not other things? We will not suggest milk; but, surely, in these dear coal days, a company might supply us with pipes and taps, which we could turn on when we wanted hot air. Music, too; cannot a grand central dome be contrived, with big organs and bands, sound reflectors, &c., &c., and pipes laid on to our houses, and advertisements in the daily papers of each night's programme? as, for instance—"Eight o'clock, 'Cujus Animam;' 8.15, Chorus from 'L'Isle de Tulipatan;' 8.30, Chorus from 'Faust.'" "Ah! turn on the tap at 8.15. The music from 'Tulipatan' is very pretty."

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, from by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 307.

November 15, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE GLOSSY STRANGER.



"Al!" said Mr. Sellars, the butler, taking off his spectacles, and laying down the *Times*, which he always made a point of going over very carefully before he let Sir Richard or his lady have a glance. Nominally, the purpose for which Mr. Sellars took the paper was to air it—to change it from a damp, limp sheet, to

one that was crisp and rattled as it was moved; but this airing took a long time, for Mr. Sellars always read the police reports from beginning to end, and all the short bottom paragraphs that seemed to promise juicily, occasionally favouring the housekeeper or one of the men with an extract read aloud—very kind, no doubt, and well intentioned, but extremely painful to the listener, inasmuch as Mr. Sellars had a habit of bending his neck and letting his chin repose on his breast, while he seemed to direct the whole of his discourse to the central button on his shirt front—his audience often listening in vain.

"Ha!" he said one morning, as he refolded the paper, "my opinion of them French is that they always wants to have some one standing over 'em with a big stick to keep 'em in order, for they're always in hot water over there. What do they want, too, letting loose their roughs to come over here? We've had enough of it with that little Frenchman—beggar; and what does he do but act like a sick, tell every one he knows how he has got on, and of course they beset the house.

Five furreners have we had here these two days with something to sell, and take 'No!' for an answer they won't."

Here a double knock at the front door interrupted his musings, and he stood and listened. Nobody seemed going to answer it, so he went to the housekeeper's room door and shouted "Ennery!"

"Yezzer," came from a distance.

"Front door!"

"I'm cleaning the plate!" cried the same voice, supplementing the remark with a muttered grumble.

"Where's James?"

"Doing the drawn'-room lookin' glasses," was the reply, followed directly after by a repetition of the knock.

There was no help for it, so Mr. Sellars puffed up the stone staircase and along the hall, where he paused for a moment to lay down his newspaper before going to the door, which he threw open to find upon the step a very dark, black-bearded man, with piercing eyes, jetty brows, no hair to speak of, but what there was spiky and black, peeping out at the sides from beneath the brim of the curliest, glossiest, shortest-napped hat that was ever ironed up to a dazzling polish.

The effect of the glossy hat was, however, to some extent neutralized by the visitor's boots, which were of wonderful crinkly patent leather, very round at the toe, very thin in the sole, and half covered by glossy black trousers, continued under the boots in cloth straps, which held the said pantaloons tight down, as the braces of their owner held them tight up, and made them sit in a series of straight folds from top to sole. His coat, also of glossy black, was pinched in at the waist, and fitted him to perfection, being buttoned over a white vest, beyond which was a black satin something which hid the wearer's shirt front; but his collar and cuffs were prodigious in their size and whiteness, as they appeared above and

below that coat. It was a strange coat, too, looking like one of the progeny of a male dress coat and a female frock ditto—as the tailors say; while to complete the picture, jauntily tied by great silken cords, a flowing cloak, glossy as the rest, hung from the visitor's shoulders.

As Mr. Sellars stood, with puffed-out cheeks, seeing all this, as he glanced at the new arrival from top to toe and back again, he became also aware that the stranger held in one delicately gloved hand a jetty black tasselled walking stick, in the other a card case, from which he was drawing a delicate-looking card.

"Take—thees—to—your—masster," said the visitor, holding out the card, and speaking very deliberately, as if to avoid mistakes of pronunciation.

Mr. Sellars took the card, and looked at it. Then he looked again at the visitor. He was another "furrener," as Mr. Sellars would have called him; but that hat, those boots, that cloak, and, above all, those gloves!

Mr. Sellars was impressed; and though he hesitated, it was with a bad grace. If the stranger had asked if Sir Richard were at home at such an out-of-the-way time in the morning, of course he would have said "No;" but when such an archangel of fashion and deportment stood before him, and in the most nonchalant manner held out a delicate card, and said, "Take this to your master," what was he to do?

But the visitor was, after all, only another Frenchman; and Mr. Sellars hesitated, glanced at the card, looked back at the giver, and then shrank—shrank involuntarily; for the stranger was fixing him with a pair of eyes that looked out now from a narrow black slit, so it seemed to the butler, and for a few moments he stood helpless and unnerved, till the stranger smiled blandly, waved one hand, bowed, and Mr. Sellars backed slowly into the hall, leaving the visitor upon the doorstep.

Mr. Sellars felt better as soon as he was out of the range of those eyes. He did not know it himself, but they had had some influence upon him sufficient to make him take the card and walk towards the library.

But before he reached the door he paused. Sir Richard had told him he could see no foreigners—no one at all likely to have come from Rivière; and perhaps this might be one of his friends.

He recovered himself, and walked back to the door, only to feel convinced, as he drew near once more, that it was impossible that this glossy stranger could be one of that set.

"If you please, sir," he began, "Sir Richard—"

"Take—thees—to—your—masster," said the stranger, pointing now to the card with his glossy cane.

Mr. Sellars looked in the narrow eyes again, and he was subdued. There was no resisting them. They had a strange effect—such a one as sent him slowly back to the library, telling himself that he must risk it anyhow, even if Sir Richard were cross.

He entered the library with fear and trembling.

Sir Richard was not there.

This was a check. He must ~~be in the~~ drawing-room, so he went up ~~there~~; but it was only to find James ostensibly polishing the long mirrors, but really grinning at himself and admiring his figure as he stood posed upon a pair of steps.

"Sir Richard aint been here," said that worthy, beginning to polish vigorously, and turning red in the face.

So Mr. Sellars went out softly, crossed the landing, and tapped at the door of her ladyship's boudoir, answered to the "Come in!" and learned that Sir Richard had gone up to his dressing-room.

By this time Mr. Sellars was beginning to pant, for he had a good deal of flesh to carry. There was nothing for it, though, but to proceed; so he panted up to the said dressing-room, to find Sir Richard studiously contemplating a pair of leathers, evidently with ideas of the future hunting season.

"Well?" came the gruff salute.

"A foreign gentleman, sir."

"What?" thundered Sir Richard, in tones that made the butler shrink back, holding the card at arm's length.

"The card, sir—quite the gentleman," stammered the butler.

Sir Richard glanced at the card, without taking it in his hand.

"Some confounded friend," he muttered, gloomily. "No, hang me if I go out!" he exclaimed. "I can't stand a meeting with him. Here, you sir—take the card back, and tell the fellow I won't see him, and if he comes again he will be given into custody. Do it too!" he exclaimed, growing louder and more excited, as he backed Sellars to

the door, through which that gentleman gladly escaped, taking even pleasure in the bang which followed his exit, for he feared his angry lord—wrath having the effect upon him of making his stout person feel like so much jelly; consequently, he descended the stairs more hastily than was his wont, growing vexed himself with the visitor who had got him such a snubbing, and ready to pour upon him the vials of his own wrath.

"A-coming here and ordering me about," grumbled Mr. Sellars. "Let him take his dirty bit of pasteboard to some one else. Give him into custody, eh? Yes, I will, and no mistake, if he sauces me; and—eh? what?"

Mr. Sellars stood aghast; for he had reached the front door, card in hand, to find that the stranger had gone.

He stepped out and down the step, looking up and down the square, but there was no one visible; so Mr. Sellars stepped back into the hall, and closed the door, looking very serious as he laid the card down upon the table, puffed his cheeks a little, and then stood upon a mat thinking.

The upshot of his thoughts was that he went to a stand and counted the umbrellas.

All right.

The coats.

None missing.

The hats.

Pooh! he was too well dressed for that. What did he want, then? for it was evident that he had stolen nothing from the hall.

There was some plate, though, in the dining-room—was he after that?

Mr. Sellars broke out in a cold perspiration as he hastened into the big room, and counted the articles upon the sideboard, to find that they were all there; and a visit to the library showed that the big silver inkstand was also safe.

"What's it mean?" said Mr. Sellars, as he stood musing upon the mat; but he could make nothing more of it, only that the stranger was gone, and the card, when read, "*Monsieur Alexis Aimée*," gave no explanation.

"Depend upon it," said Mr. Sellars, sagely, as he descended to the lower regions, "he got tired of waiting, and he means to call again. Ha!" he said, as he got to the housekeeper's room, and sank with a sigh into his chair; "but he doesn't know about the police."

CHAPTER L.

I CARRY A STING.

LOUIS RIVIERE had seen too much danger in his eventful life to be appalled by his position, one which seemed more to appertain to the gloomy piazzas of Venice than to a police-guarded London street; but the stranger, when he comes to our shores, brings with him strange ways, even as the British sailor meets assault in a foreign land with a knock-down blow of his fist.

It was a peculiar position for Rivière, but he had lived so long in peril that an instant sufficed to set aside surprise and place him well upon the alert. Lithe as an eel, as the blow fell he wrenched himself aside; and before the hand was half raised for a second stroke, Rivière caught his assailant's wrist, holding the stiletto at arm's length, while his own right hand held something pointed and sharp, which glittered in the light.

"I carry a sting, my friend," he hissed as his own wrist was caught in turn, and the two men stood face to face, with burning eyes and throbbing pulses, each knowing that a moment's weakness might mean death.

"You were cunning, my friend," snarled Rivière again, speaking through his teeth, as the almost motionless struggle went on—an awful struggle, from the strange, cold silence of the men. There was no violent writhing or contortion, only hand clasping wrist—each man exerting all his strength in a quiet, nervous pressure, the result for the weaker being that a sharp blade would pierce him as his muscles relaxed.

"Traitor, spy!" hissed his assailant, in reply, as he now made a strong effort, but only to lose ground, for Rivière seemed, like a clever fencer, to meet assault by presenting his point; and at the end of a minute his assailant knew that his chance of fulfilling his mission was gone, bending now his attention to the easiest way of making his escape.

But this was no light matter; for his attack had roused the thirst for blood in Rivière, whose eyes glittered now dangerously, as he pressed his enemy back step by step, step by step, across the pavement and into the road.

Here for a few moments they stood panting, hand still grasping wrist; and yet there was no wild, excited struggle—all took place so silently that not a sound disturbed the quiet of the street.

"Life for life," thought Rivière. "He would have slain me in his treacherous attack, and now—Ah!"

Opportunity seemed to serve him; for his enemy slowly yielded inch by inch, being borne down by Rivière's superior power, till he appeared, as it were, to collapse suddenly, and fall upon one knee. But as Rivière half lost his balance by this sudden giving way, he woke to the fact that it was but a ruse; for his assailant shot up once more, striking the other full in the chest, and driving him backwards. Then, making a rapid blow with his freed hand, the man darted away; and Rivière stood shivering with excitement, and listening to the pat, pat, pat of retiring footsteps, as he stood feeling his shoulder and drawing from the thick collar of his coat a tiny, keen little knife, which had missed injuring him by the eighth of an inch.

"Let him go," he muttered; "but, mon Dieu! what would they—am I to be hunted to death?"

The regular pace of a coming policeman aroused him; and for a moment he thought of asking his help, and telling of what had taken place.

"But what good?" he muttered. "I have escaped. I must be my own police for the future, and take care. But it was an escape!"

He went away, shivering nervously, and hardly able to realize the fact that he was uninjured; while as he went along the streets he kept fancying he saw dark figures crouching in every doorway, till he regained the better lighted thoroughfares, where he walked up and down, or rested in the neighbourhood of some cabstand, where there were people about, till broad daylight.

For the space of about a week after this night's work, Rivière, in a desultory way, pursued what he thought was a search for his lost wife. He asked at the different steamboat offices, and made inquiries at the principal termini of the railways—of course, without result; and then, brooding over his loss, he grew more and more imbued with the idea that, believing he had forsaken her, Marie had listened to the persuasions of Lemaire, who had visited her, and then, as soon as she felt strong enough, fled with him to France.

Then he sank into a dull, low, listless state, living he knew not how, but daily sinking mentally and bodily, till he grew more weak and helpless. He went again and

again to the Soho lodgings, asking the first time for news; afterwards directing a mute look of entreaty at his old landlady, who often confided to her lodger the fact that "her heart bled for the poor dear man, whose sufferings was terrible to behold." And it was to her kindness that he owed many a night's lodging and many a meal; for he seemed nerveless now, and without the spirit to strike out against the stream that was bearing him away.

He had given over to this woman the little furniture that belonged to him, sufficient in its value to free him from the arrears he owed her; and nothing could have been more honourable than his behaviour, she told him, when one morning he came to bid her farewell.

"And sha'n't I see you no more, Muster Rivvyer?" she said.

"No," he replied, sadly, "no more; but if you should ever have news for me, send it by letter to the Poste Restante, and I shall get it—if I am alive," he added, after a slight pause.

The landlady caught him by his thin arm, and gazed anxiously into his wild eyes.

"You're not thinking of any wickedness of that sort, Muster Rivvyer, are you?" she said, hoarsely. "Don't, don't—please, don't give your mind to that wickedness."

"To what wickedness?" he said, gazing at her vacantly.

"Why—why—you—you were thinking of going out of the—there, was there ever such a fool as I am, to go and put such an idea into the poor man's head?"

"And why not?" he said, wearily—"why not go out of the world? I know that was what you meant. Why not leave here? There is not room for me in this place—why should I live?"

"Because—because," exclaimed the woman, excitedly—"what, what shall I tell him? Oh, why is not some one here to stop him?" she muttered to herself. "Because—there, I have it, thank God for the thought!—because she might come back."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, almost in a shriek, and then subsiding into a quiet tone. "Yes, you have reason—you are right. She might come back. Yes," he muttered to himself, "she might come to see whether I was so great a villain as she believed me. You have reason," he added, aloud. "Do not tremble for me. I go; and if you have news for me, you can write."

Before she could stretch out her hand to stay him, he had gone; and she stood shaking her head, thinking of his great troubles, and wondering whether he really had had so sinister an intention as she surmised, and whether her words had had the effect of turning him into a better frame of mind.

CHAPTER LI.

A QUIET AFTERNOON.

FOR the first few days Sir Richard Lawler troubled himself hugely about the threats of Rivière; but his was not a nature for such utterances to make a deep and lasting impression. At the end of a week the remembrance was growing weaker, and when a fortnight had elapsed he would have ceased to think of it at all, had not Lady Lawler's occasional hysterical fits brought the circumstances back to mind. For the adventure had made a deep impression upon her, sending her into a state of nervous depression, wherein she was constantly imagining that some terrible misfortune was about to fall upon them, in spite of Sir Richard's smiles at her fears. She joined with him now, readily enough, in denouncing Rivière's behaviour, and with tears, asked pardon again and again for her frivolous conduct. But this was not needed: any division between man and wife that had previously existed being now thoroughly healed.

A month passed, and as nothing further had been seen or heard of Rivière, his threats had nearly passed from their mind, and Sir Richard proposed a couple of months in Devonshire to complete his wife's cure.

The matter was pretty well discussed in the servants' hall and housekeeper's room, Mr. Sellars announcing his great dislike, from principle, to the country. The footmen disapproved, too, of the movement; and amongst the female servants, Jane looked rather gloomy at the prospect of being separated from Mr. Abram Higgs for a couple of months. She even debated within herself whether it would not be sensible on her part to say "Yes" the next time he asked her a certain question; for what might not occur during a two months' absence? He might resent her coldness and forget her, and that would be terrible; not that she would have owned to her disappointment, but have bridled up and said it was a "good job." Anyhow, she was a great deal

more tender to Abram Higgs the next time he came, imparting so much pleasure to that worthy, that upon parting he intimated his intention of "running up for an hour the next afternoon."

The next afternoon arrived, and, fortunately for the lovers, Sir Richard and Lady Lawler had gone out, leaving Jane at liberty, since she thought that her second in command could take care of little Clive, while she had a pleasant interview with Abram.

Fortune does not always favour us. Elizabeth, under-nurse, was seized with a terrible bilious headache, and went to bed, leaving the little boy to Jane, who, to make the best of things, took him down into the dining-room, ostensibly to see "the gee-gees," but really to enable sapient Jane to watch from the dining-room window for the coming of Mr. Higgs.

Mr. Sellars was taking a nap; the footman was out with the carriage; the under-butler, having laid the cloth, was spelling over the *Times*, which his chief had just let fall; the cook and her underlings were busy enough in the kitchen; housemaid, too, and lady's-maid had gone up—to use their own expressive term—to clean themselves; and all was very quiet and peaceful in the great house. As for the little boy, he toddled about over the Turkey carpet, and hid himself beneath the great table, laughing merrily as he peeped forth from the long damask folds at his nurse, who busied herself in watching from the window, troubling herself very little about the child, as he was so good.

It was a fine bright afternoon, and Jane felt in excellent spirits. She was not so very angry with the policeman who went by and nodded laughingly at her. She recognised, too, the milkman, when he came and gave her a smile at the open window where she stood, before he dragged at the bell, and yelled out his customary falsetto yodel. She looked down musingly into the area as he rattled his can, and delivered his milk, tramped up the stone stairs, and walked off to yell at another area gate.

Then, as she stood there, a very glossy-looking, dark, foreign gentleman sauntered by, stopping by the railings to strike a light and illumine the cigar he so leisurely took from a showy case. This gentleman came back, too, twice; and made Jane blush by the way he stared.

But at last he disappeared, to be succeeded by a shabby-looking man, who came to the area gate, opened it as if he knew how, and held up something in a box for sale. Then an organ grinder came and persistently ground, till the little man with something to sell came again, and pestered the girl to buy, or to exchange some old things for a pair of vases.

"They will do for you when you are married," he said to her; but, although bent in mind upon that pleasant ceremony, Jane would not listen to the voice of the charmer; but watched on till her heart gave a bump, as she caught sight of Abram Higgs coming along by the square railings, and after letting him see her at the window, she turned to the child.

"Now, Clivey will be a good little boy while nurse goes downstairs, won't he?"

The child looked up and laughed, and then resumed his former task of sticking the prongs of a silver fork, which he had drawn from the table, in amongst the long pile of the thick carpet.

The next minute Jane had hurried out of the room, and closed the dining-room door after her, and was running to the head of the stairs, when she encountered housemaid No. 2.

"Oh, Fanny! I'm just going downstairs for a few minutes. I've left Clive in the dining-room; go and have a look at him."

"Yes, as soon as I've been upstairs," was the reply. "I won't be long."

Away went Fanny to her ladyship's room, and away went Jane downstairs into the area; the former to forget the child in the contemplation of two or three new dresses fresh home from the modiste, and laid out on her ladyship's bed—the latter to forget the child in the sweet discourse of her beloved, for as she went she heard the clang of the area gate.

Half an hour had glided away like thirty seconds, when Fanny turned with a sigh from the dresses, wishing that she had been a lady, and thinking of how she would, had such been the case, have decked her charms. Then she took up her water-can with a sigh, and slowly proceeded downstairs, recollected the little boy when half-way, and hastened to the dining-room, to find the table cloth a little dragged at one end, a fork and a couple of table spoons on the carpet; but—no child.

She left the room, and then ran back,

thinking that perhaps he was asleep beneath the table. At the same time she saw, too, that the window was partly open, and a chair beneath.

"She's been and fetched him," muttered Fanny; and going back, she took her can, and proceeded to the lower regions, humming a tune, and then went along the passage.

Fanny halted as she heard the closing of the area door, and then walked towards her who had shut it; and directly after she stood face to face with Jane.

"Well," said the latter, "where is the child?"

"The child!" exclaimed Fanny, taken aback—"the child!"

"Yes," exclaimed Jane, in a strange tone of voice—"the child. Didn't I ask you to go in to him?—and you haven't been."

"I went just now," said Fanny, snatching at a chance for exculpation.

"Just now!" cried Jane, repeating her words. "I asked you to go ever so long ago. I only wanted to come downstairs a minute. But where is the boy?"

"Where is the boy?" stammered Fanny. "I thought you had him."

"I have him!" shrieked Jane. "No, no! I haven't got him. Oh, Fanny, if you've lost him, I'll never forgive you."

"How can I have lost him?" cried Fanny, spitefully. "He must have gone up into the nursery, then, if he isn't down here."

Jane flew by her into the dining-room, ran round it hastily, peered beneath the cloth, and then ran up to the nursery; searched everywhere she could think of; and then came tearing down the stairs, shrieking with all her might—

"The child!—the child!—where is Master Clive?"

NEW NEWS OF THE OLD.—I.

WHEN we compare the journals as they were a century ago with the journals as they are now, it must surely appear to us that one of the greatest proofs of the rapid progress of the age lies in the improvement of our newspapers, whether in regard to matter, or with reference to the printing, or in any other respect. Yet, indeed, living as we do in these days of sound scientific learning, in these times when the power of so-called influence is on the wane, and the best man stands the best chance of success in the world, when civilization is

advancing with swifter strides than it ever did before, and steam and electricity are all in all, we must find it almost impossible to understand fully the ways and feelings of our forefathers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A nation, it is said, may be judged by its literature; and not more, perhaps, by that branch which is composed of deep and highly wrought works than by that which consists of the matter intended to live but for a day—its newspapers. It is the object of the present paper to consider the English journals as they were in their infancy, and to compare them in their improvement, step by step, with those of our own times.

Of the fact that printed newspapers had their origin in England, no doubt whatever exists. It is true that news-sheets were published in Venice, during a war with the Turks, in 1563; but these were all written and passed about from hand to hand, a small coin called "gazetta"—whence "gazette"—being paid for the privilege of reading them. And even the date of our own news-sheets has been placed too early; for it was asserted that the *English Mercurie* was published in 1588, a copy of it existing in the British Museum. But it has been proved beyond a doubt that this sheet is a forgery, of much later date than that assigned to it; and we may say that the first English newspapers which appeared were those in the reign of James I., in the shape of small quarto pamphlets, as the *Newes from Spain*, dated 1611, *Newes from Italy*, 1618, and such like, wherever interesting operations were going on.

Previous to the circulation of these irregular news-sheets, the few foreign and home transactions which were known were conveyed about the country by means of news-letters, written by special retainers for their masters, and despatched to the latter by couriers; and, beyond this, persons living in the country had no way of learning the affairs of the world and the doings of the day. A journal writer of those times would squeeze himself into any meeting, attend anything of note, and make a point of discovering every little matter, at whatever risk. But now that these pamphlets occasionally came out, it was possible to glean rather more idea of the state of England than it had been.

Curious things these news-books were, too, the printed form of those letters which

they were supplanting—of a style homely and familiar, as from friend to friend; though now and then, doubtless, expressing with a certain amount of freedom the political opinions of the writer. But even now that news-sheets were printed, the majority of news was still conveyed in the old way, by means of the written letters, the disuse of which was very gradual, and indeed scarcely began until the commencement of regular weekly publications. This took place in 1621, when Nathaniel Butler brought out the *Weekly News*, on the 9th of October—a meagre chronicle, it is true, but nevertheless the foundation of journalism.

For the next ten or twenty years, newspapers do not appear to have had a very flourishing time; and the next paper that seems to have been of any note was the *Curranto*, a journal containing news from Holland, and published in 1639. After this, during the concluding years of the reign of the unfortunate Charles I., the news-sheets grew very rapidly in number, and no less than twenty were started in 1642-3. *Diurnals* were frequent, and *Mercuries* ad nauseam; and to distinguish between the different *Mercuries* qualifying adjectives were affixed, some of these being not of the least ridiculous. Thus we find the *Mercurius Acheronticus*, or *Newes from Hell*; the *Mercurius Democritus*, or *Newes from the Moon*; and so on. The *Mercurius Academicus* contains a very amusing account of the state of the University of Oxford in 1648; and the *Mercurius Eleaticus* has a very great tendency to revile its neighbour, the *Mercurius Auliens*, which it calls the "Graye's Inne Wild Goose." But the majority of the papers of this date appear to have made it their special object to foment the disturbances then existing in our faction-torn country, to excite the Roundheads against the Cavaliers, and to bring about the deposition and death of the King. Some of them put forth "leading" articles in exceedingly poor verses; and it is worth while to give two specimens, curious in themselves, and interesting for the opinions shared by the other papers, which they hold out. One of them is from the *Mercurius Melancholicus*, of November 20th, 1647, and runs as follows:—

"Alas, poor England! I am sad to see
Thy beauty turned to Anatomie;
And yet, the more I look, the more I may,
Amazed, to see things art contrary way.

There's but one thing left our griefs to sever,
Good House of Commons, now be good or
never."

The other is more elaborate, and opens
the *Mercurius Pragmaticus* for Oct. 20, of
the same year:—

"A Scot and Jesuite joyn'd in hand,
First taught the world to say,
That subjects ought to have command
And princes to obey.

They both agreed to have NO KING,
The Scotchman he cries further,
NO BISHOP. 'Tis a godly thing
States to reform by murder.

Then th' Independent, meeke and slye,
Most lowly lies at lurch;
And so to put poor Jockie by,
Resolves to have NO CHURCH.

The King dethron'd, the subjects bleed,
The Church hath no abroad;
Let us conclude they're all agreed
That sure there is NO GOD."

Editors of those days did not, it seems,
mind emerging from their editorial privacy,
for the *Kingdom's Weekly Messenger* of Dec.
14, 1647, begins with the announcement
that "certaine unexpected troubles have
fallen upon the writer, and he is afraid he
will not be so exact this weeke." In this
paper a regular diary is kept, and the whole
is signed with the initials "G. M."

Of course, any amount of accounts of the
trial and execution of Charles were issued;
but more especially prominent of the papers
of the previous week stands the *Moderate*,
which states that it "impartially commu-
nicates martial affairs to the kingdom of
England." This journal commences in the
following terms:—"The death of the wicked
is safety to the righteous; and that judge
ought to be condemned that executes not
judgment upon the person of the guilty.
And though our laws were formerly like
spiders' webs, to catch the small flies and
let the large ones go, yet shall we now finde
that justice will run down like a mighty
stream, and be as impartially executed on
him that sits on the throne as he upon the
dunghill. Upon this score the great Court
Fly of the nation is this week flown from
Windsor to London, in order to his tryal in
Westminster Hall." In the following issue
of this easy flowing journal, nine out of the
twelve small octavo pages are devoted to a
minute history of the great trial, and the sen-
tence is given in these words, "That Charles
Stuart, as a tyrant, trayter, murtherer, and

publique enemy, shall be put to death by
severing of his head from his body." The
accounts given of Charles's last moments
and final execution are many and detailed.

We do not find many papers in existence
during the Commonwealth; but we read that
after the Restoration the press was again
put under a licenser, the act concerning
which expired in 1679, and during its rule
upwards of fifty newspapers seem to have
been published. One of these bears the
following laughable title:—"News from the
Land of Chivalry, being the pleasant and
delectable History, and Wonderful and
Strange Adventures of Don Rugero de
Strangmento, Knight of the Squeaking Fid-
dlestick." At this period, too, the *Gazette*
was issued—first published at Oxford on the
16th of November, 1665, as the Court was
there, on account of the plague; and three
months later removed to London, where it
has remained ever since. The first number
of this, the oldest of our own journals, con-
tains a notice of the elevation of Dr. Bland-
ford to the see of Oxford, a list of the
sheriffs of England, and a few paragraphs of
home and foreign intelligence. It has also
a plague return, and is signed thus:—
"Oxon, Printed by Leonard Litchfield, and
Reprinted at London, for the use of some
Merchants and Gentlemen, whodesirethem." In
the number for Sept. 10, 1666, is a long
account, issued "by order of His Majestie," of
the Great Fire of London; and a month
afterwards comes a command for the general
observance of a day of fasting on account
of it. The following paragraph, in the
Gazette for May 20th, 1667, adds its testi-
mony to the prevailing idea of the king's
evil being cured by royal touch:—"We are,
by His Majestie's Command, to give notice,
That by reason of the great Heats which
are growing on, there will be no further
touching for the Evil till Michaelmas next,
and accordingly all persons concerned are
to forbear their addresses till that time."

Almost the first, if not the very first,
genuine advertisement was one which ap-
peared in the *Gazette* for the 4th of July,
1667, and which ran thus:—"There is newly
published an Exact Collection of all the
Statutes at large, now in Force, from the
year 1640 to this present time. Printed in
fair character by His Majestie's Printer;
and to be sold by the Booksellers of Fleet-
street and Holborn." Truly, this state of
things forms a contrast to that of our own

time, when we find every newspaper literally teeming with advertisements of all kinds, from happy announcements of births, more solemn ones of marriages, and mournful ones of deaths, to advertisements of trades and sales, notices for afflicted relatives, and columns of bonds drawn, with all imaginable and indescribable variations. But in the journals of that day such things as public printed advertisements were just known, and no more. Their number was not, however, long in increasing, and our ancestors had advanced so far in a short time as to allow of such an advertisement as this:—"There was lost in Westminster, the third instant, a white Greyhound Dog, with red cheeks, and a spot of Red on one side. Whosoever shall bring intelligence of him to his Grace the Duke of Albemarle's Porter at the Cockpit, shall be well rewarded for his pains." But here it may have been a golden influence that wrought this premature progress in our newspapers.

Amongst other leading characteristics of the journalistic press, the use of "tall" words is not one of the most recent: indeed, it is not impossible—and examples would seem to urge their testimony that it is not improbable either—that they of olden time duly appreciated their frequent employment. At any rate, the following paragraph would seem to hint that such *might* have been—of course we would not for a moment urge that it *was*, but that it might have been—the case. "The long-expected, often and many ways most dismally obstructed and interrupted work of the Heptaglot Lexicon, compiled by Dr. Edmund Castell, is now fully finished; and all the subscribers to it are desired to send for their several copies, &c." We should fancy few subscribers to a work would be found nowadays, had each to send for his own copies.

In a paper dated 1681 appears an advertisement against lotteries; and a few days afterwards comes a notice of a race about to be run for the Woodstock Plate, "being about £40 prize. Horses carrying ten stone, three heats." The races were, it would appear, to last two days, *one* race being run on each day. Not much need to talk about tempora mutantur after that! But here is an official report which beats all ours. It is in a *Gazette* for the same year:—"Windsor, July 6th. This day His Majesty had a solemn trial of an extraordinary engine, lately invented by Sir Samuel Morland,

knight and baronet. The engine placed in the plain, about 22 pole from the foot of the Castle Hill, and being wrought by the strength of four men, forced up the water through a leaden pipe, of an inch and three-quarters bore, into a vessel placed on the Tarras Walk, and gauged exactly for that purpose, at the rate of about sixty barrels an hour, as His Majesty was pleased himself to measure most accurately by his minute watch. There are more experiments to be made, and then there will be published a more particular account, to contradict those many false representations and malicious reflections lately spread by some ignorant scribbling pamphleteers."

We first find the newspaper stamp used in 1712, and it was then about half the size which it was in its latest form. At that time the newspaper was stamped on every page. An average journal was a little smaller in size than the present *Pall Mall Gazette*, and had about ten or twelve advertisements—all sorts mixed up indiscriminately, as sales, insolvencies, things lost, discharges, and so on; one particular one occurring not unlike some of our day, and telling how that "Whereas Susannah, wife of Oswell Michill, of Chatham, in the county of Kent, gunner of Her Majesty's ship the *Lyon*, hath eloped from her said husband, and hath taken away with her in money, plate, rings, tickets, writings, and silks, to the value of £150, these are to desire all persons not to trust the said Susannah with money or goods on account of her said husband, for that he will not pay any debts she shall contract after the publication hereof."

From this time, and for the next fifty years, the newspaper press most certainly did not flourish, but seemed to be about to fail altogether. And it was only in 1760 that even its old condition was attained, this recovery of its prestige being due mainly to the vigorous and entirely novel articles which came from the pen of Wilkes, the editor of the *North Briton*, a man who gained, some three years subsequently, a certain considerable notoriety. Until these days the press had always reported political matter in a very obscure manner, mentioning persons only by their initials, as the "Marquis of R—," or "Mr. P.;" but now Wilkes caused whole names to be printed, and for the article in No. 45 of his paper, on the King's speech at the prorogation, he was tried and convicted for libel. It is true that such harsh-

ness as this was compatible with neither the freedom nor the fairness of the press; and, whilst a writer feared the law, he was likely to evade the truth. But it must be remembered that the purity of journalism was not yet a thing of being, but to come; and where names were mentioned, slander too often accompanied them.

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER X.

"Give me the avow'd, the erect, the manly toe,
Bold I can meet, perhaps may turn his blow;
But of all plagues, good Heaven, thy wrath can
send,
Save, save, oh! save me from the Candid Friend."
Canning.

DURING the last few days of August the sky had gradually assumed a gloomy and threatening aspect, thereby causing to many of her Majesty's subjects, both of Great Britain and Ireland, dubious misgivings as to what kind of weather might be expected on the Britisher's great field day. On the morning of that all-important day, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy —, how many manly mouths breathed a sigh of relief on beholding a clear saffron sunrise; and what fair heads, for nights of sleep bereft by anxious thought, were again laid down to rest on ascertaining that their Dolly Vardens would not be reduced to a state of incipient papier mâché before sunset?

Hitherto the first of September had always been to Agnes a red-letter day; but it was otherwise this year, for Captain Nolan was not included in the Heathfield shooting party. She had screwed up courage, and asked her aunt if he ought not to be invited; but Mrs. Manning, who had a vague idea as to the morals of all gentlemen in the army, thought not; and Agnes felt too guilty to press the point further. But as he, the only person in whose shooting she took the slightest interest, was not to be of the party, she inwardly resolved, if possible, to get off accompanying the luncheon hampers' escort of young ladies.

If, as some people say, there is a certain satisfaction in doing your duty, Agnes ought to have felt that supreme consolation. She had got up early that morning, administered to the wants of the more enthusiastic young Nimrods, and listened attentively to the number of birds each old gentleman had

shot on the first for the last twenty or thirty years. Yet, judging from her face, she looked decidedly dissatisfied, as she sat listlessly by her open window, thinking over her last meeting with Captain Nolan, when he told her he had waited and waited for an invitation from Mrs. Manning; but seeing no chance of getting one, had at last consented to join the Brownsmiths' party. Not that he expected to enjoy it; but it was so absurd to be in the country on the first and have no shooting. He would greatly have preferred going to Churchhill; but having been there for the grouse, could not expect Lord Tunbridge to ask him again so soon. Agnes sat on, gazing into space, until roused by the creaking of wheels and the tramp of many feet below. On looking down, she saw what made her smile.

Drawn up in a double row before the Hall door stood all the vehicles and animals of the horse species in anywise connected with the Heathfield establishment, like slaves ready for hire in the market place; the hirers in this case being a bevy of fair girls, who fluttered about choosing their places, and amicably fighting over the whip seats. The riders had already mounted, and according to time-honoured custom were backing their steeds on to the flower beds and letting them cull the choicest roses, greatly to the indignation of the head gardener, who, having volunteered for field service that day, was told off to hold two fractious little ponies, who, with ears well laid back, rolled the whites of their eyes and grinned horribly in the face of the affrighted Sandy.

Agnes ran downstairs to her aunt, who, in a large arm-chair, was seated in the porch, watching the departure of her guests. Kneeling down by her side—

"Do let me stay at home with you, aunt; I cannot bear leaving you alone all the afternoon, when you have been so ill," said she, in a whisper, which, however, was unfortunately overheard by a sharp-eared young lady, who immediately gave the alarm—

"That dear Miss Lane was not coming with them."

This announcement brought down such shrieks of lamentation on Agnes's head, that in sheer desperation she took refuge in the chaperone's carriage; so putting an end to much chatter and assumed affection.

Agnes, ostrich like, thinking to render herself invisible, thrust her head into a corner of the carriage; but finding nothing

very amusing in seeing yellow rings hopping about on an indigo ground, opened her eyes to see who were her companions in affliction. Opposite to her sat the highly aristocratic Mrs. Norton, who was known to sniff a plebeian a mile off, and tell any under-three-generation man at a glance. By her side reclined her washed-out daughter, whom nobody as yet, with a sufficiently well-bred nose, had offered to take off her mother's hands.

With his back to the horses sat that mother's hope and joy—a young man of an interesting cast of countenance, with a vague halo of genius hanging around him. How he had acquired a savant's reputation puzzled even his nearest and dearest friends; but having dropped into the seat of Fame, he prudently never opened his mouth, except to complain of the exertion of so doing, and thereby kept up the delusion. Mysterious rumours floated about of deep sayings, pregnant with wit and humour, having been uttered by him at his club to a friend in confidence; but as these had never taken tangible form, sceptics were heard to doubt if they ever had existence, save in the imagination of his idolatrous mother, who never wearied of going from house to house singing the perfections of her adored Adolphus.

The Nortons were a most united family, with an implicit faith in each other's claim to infallibility. This infallible trio maintained a strict silence, until, on rounding a wood, the carriage for a short time came in sight and hearing of the Brownsmiths' shooting party at luncheon. Besides Captain Nolan, and a number of young men Mr. Brownsmith had picked up at various hotels in different countries, he had invited all the officers, their wives and belongings, from Muggerford; so it was a large and jovial party that met the eyes, and a laughing and rather noisy party that offended the ears, of Agnes's refined companions.

"I never heard such a shocking noise issuing from the lips of people calling themselves ladies and gentlemen," said Mrs. Norton, with a prolonged sniff and back movement of the head, as if suffering from a tight bearing rein.

"Oh, dreadful, mamma!" echoed the daughter.

"Such an exertion!" murmured the son.

"So ill-bred, my dear."

"Quite below par."

"So very fatiguing."

"What generation can they be, mamma?"

"The first, my dear; do you not agree with me, Adolphus?"

"My dear mother, I am too exhausted for discussion."

After which brilliant effort of conversation they again relapsed into their lethargic state, from which they were soon rudely roused by the carriage drawing up at the entrance of a wood, where active preparations had already commenced. There is a peculiar fascination in a luncheon out of doors, which embraces all the advantages with none of the disadvantages of an ordinary picnic. To the ladies, there is a spice of excitement in being fringed round with guns which may go off, and poor dead birds which have been slain by the aforesaid murderous weapons. Then, again, the men's faces alone are worthy of study. While the good shots look placidly on, as if resting on their well-earned laurels, those whose guns "just missed fire," or the "sun came right in their eyes," as if desirous of making up for want of skill in the field, plunge madly among the hampers, thereby causing ruthless havoc to the crockery, and dismay to pervade the faces of the myrmidons in plush.

The proverbial angel, whose three flights over a dinner table is always mysteriously announced by an old lady who has been lying in wait for the first pause, never visits these impromptu repasts—either not liking the smell of gunpowder, or there being no lady present willing to acknowledge the connection. Those with flirtations on hand make the best of their time, well knowing that no straying is allowed, and that all that has to be said or looked must be got in over the luncheon. Thus talk is generally rife on these occasions.

Mr. Norton thinking—and rightly, for once in his life—that he had at last found some one capable of appreciating his silence, attached himself to Agnes; and, seated on her right, proved a very effectual damper to any conversation in his immediate neighbourhood.

Mr. Græme, who had been especially requested by Mrs. Manning to look after Mrs. Norton, yet managed to get on Agnes's left, and from time to time endeavoured to draw her out; but all his well-meant overtures were met by marked coldness on her part—the fact being, she could hardly bring herself to be barely civil to him, whose presence

there somehow seemed to her to cast a marked reflection on her lover. Having talked Mrs. Norton into a plate of chicken pie and some iced champagne, he tried to make a last effort to dispel the gloom that hung on Agnes' face. Remembering that until this day she had always run first to him to know his luck, he opened fire with the following unfortunate speech, which proved a very lucifer to her smouldering anger—

"Agnes, you have not asked me what bag I have made to-day."

"Of course not; you do not wish me to reduce you to the miserable state of that unhappy man opposite the ham, whom Miss Norton, in the words of the nursery rhymmer, has just made confess that 'Twice ten is twenty, my bag is empty.'"

Mr. Græme, who was a good shot, felt hurt at the flippancy of her answer; and said, gravely—

"I am afraid my question vexed you?"

"Not at all," said she, feeling he was all vexation.

"What is the matter, my child? I will walk home with you, instead of shooting, this afternoon, if you will tell me," continued he, eagerly, under his breath.

"Nothing is the matter; but I do hate things being raked up to hurt people's feelings. My good lump of Wenham on my right makes no remarks and asks no questions," said she, turning her back on Mr. Græme, and wondering how she had dared to speak to him in the way she had done. Then she thought of that glimpse she had caught of a well-beloved figure, bending over a golden-headed girl by his side, and she longed to know the subject of their conversation. So do I; moreover, I mean to know, and not being selfishly inclined, you shall partake with me in a peep of the past.

"I wish Agnes Lane were here," said Julia, with her eyelashes cast down à la Jesuit.

"Do you?" said Captain Nolan. "Why?"

"Oh, because I am so very sorry for her. I wish she would be my friend; but she is always so cold to poor little me."

"Sorry for Miss Lane?" said he, in a surprised tone.

"Oh, yes; for they say Mrs. Manning is not likely to live very long."

"Well, I do not see why that should cause inconsolable sorrow. Of course she would naturally feel her aunt's death; but in time

the possession of a place like Heathfield must be some consolation."

"Why," said Julia, striving to hide her laughter, "don't you know all the property goes away to a distant cousin whom nobody knows, and that Agnes Lane will only have what Mrs. Manning has managed to scrape together? She has nothing of her own. You know, her mother ran away with a very low man with no money." Then, having got her face under control again, with a sympathetic look she delivered her final shot, "When you think of all the circumstances, it is a wonder Agnes is so ladylike."

"Agnes—Miss Lane, I mean—is a lady in every word, thought, and action," said he, between his clenched teeth.

"I am glad we agree so," simpered Miss Brownsmith.

"Will you have some champagne?" said he, fiercely; while inwardly muttering, "If she were a man I would knock her down; but there is no protection from women's insults."

It was then that the carriage containing the Nortons and Agnes Lane drove past.

THE DRY DIGGINGS.

THE Dry Diggings of the South African diamond fields, so called in contradistinction to the diggings upon the banks of the Vaal River, consist of the three camps of Du Tort's Pan, De Beer's Kopje No. 1, and the New Rush, or De Beer's Kopje No. 2. They are situated in the middle of a vast, treeless plain, covered with Cape heaths and rhinostu bushes, and are about twenty-three miles from Pniel, on the Vaal River, and a few miles nearer to Jacobsdaal, a town in the Orange Free State, in the opposite direction. All this part of the country was known as Waterboer's Territory, so called from the name of a native chief, and was claimed by both the Colonial Government and the Orange Free State upon the discovery of diamonds; but has lately been declared British territory.

To these camps flock all the enterprising individuals in South Africa, and representatives of at least a dozen nationalities may be found there; and the diggings are found to be so superior to those on the river that the latter are now almost deserted, except by a few diggers who are not able to buy a claim at any of the richer localities. The white population principally consists of English-

men, Americans, and Boers, or South African Dutchmen; but the coloured portion of the inhabitants far outnumbers the European. Every digger has three or four Kaffir servants, and some as many as seven or eight; and one sees here representatives of every tribe within a hundred miles stalking about in all the majesty of barbaric splendour, with brass armlets and anklets, and strings of coloured beads, but not much burdened with superfluous clothing.

Although such large numbers of natives of various tribes are found at the diamond fields, between many of whom there exist hereditary feuds, yet they manage to live in a state of amity with each other, and general conflicts are rare, while individual encounters are not more frequent among the coloured races than among the Europeans. The most renowned battle which has as yet taken place at the diggings between two adverse tribes was fought towards the latter end of November, 1871, when the combat raged for more than four hours. Several hundred combatants were engaged on each side; and although the clashing of knob-kerries could be heard nearly a mile off, and the uproar of shouts and cries was deafening, no one was even seriously injured, much less killed. In fact, in these engagements there is a great deal more noise than execution, and every one has such a particular regard for his own safety that there is very little risk incurred at all.

The Kaffirs pass the day at work in the claims, with intervals for their frugal meals of "mealie" porridge and sheep's head or entrails, but are careful not to tire themselves by doing too much work; and directly their master's back is turned, they lay down the pickaxe or spade, and, curling themselves up, indulge in a quiet nap. Sometimes, being of a convivial disposition, they will exceed the bounds which prudence dictates, and imbibe as large a quantity of raw spirit in one night as would last a European for a month; but since the law has been established at the fields forbidding canteen proprietors to serve natives with spirits, unless authorized to do so by their masters, these occasions are few and far between.

At night they collect in groups round the camp fires, laughing and talking in the most uproarious manner; for there is none of the grave and stately demeanour of Fenimore Cooper's American Indians about these men; or they will chaunt a humdrum Kaffir ro-

mance, all singing at once, the whole tune consisting of a repetition of two or three notes, and keeping time by swinging from side to side, making night hideous, and outrivalling the cries of the hyænas and jackals on the outskirts of the camp.

Sometimes, when the subject of their song is a melancholy one, the whole encampment will echo with the dismal sounds of their dirge; and by the pale glimmer of the expiring fires, with their strange gestures and unearthly cries, they seem like a chorus of misanthropic spirits let loose from the infernal regions to drive away sleep from the eyelids of the tired-out digger.

When a Kaffir has earned sufficient money to purchase a gun—the height of the ambition of all natives—he retires to his native country under cover of the shadow of the night, quite regardless of the fact of his having been bound over to work for perhaps two or three months more. Thus it not unfrequently happens that, upon awaking in the early morning, the digger finds all his Kaffirs are wanting, is unable to continue working his claim, and remains idling about the camp for weeks, or even months, before he can obtain fresh men; as the demand is so great, and the objection on the part of the natives to work at the dry diggings is so general, that nearly every second digger one meets with is on the look-out for labourers.

The Zulu Kaffirs are the most sought after, on account of their superior intelligence and honesty; and if a Zulu pledges his word to remain at work for a certain period of time, one can generally depend upon his doing so; whereas a written contract, drawn up before a magistrate, does not prevent the Kaffirs of other tribes from absconding whenever they think fit. Unfortunately, Zulu land is so far distant from the diamond fields that the men of that race must necessarily be in a minority, and the few that are at the diggings have nearly all been brought up from Natal by their present masters.

The coolness and intrepidity of the Zulu in time of danger are well known; and I had an opportunity of verifying these qualities myself in the following manner. A dispute had arisen between some Basutos and Zulus who were at work in the claims; and a few hours after the quarrel, when all but one of the Zulus had gone away, seven or eight Basutos approached him with menacing looks and gestures, at the same time

indulging in that species of savage oratory of which the whole aim and object is to depreciate the adversary and glorify oneself. The Zulu, a finely built man of some six-and-twenty years, was seated on a boulder of rock at the edge of a deep claim; and, although he was perfectly aware of the presence and intentions of his opponents, he seemed to be quite unconscious of their vicinity, and remained lounging on the rock, lazily swinging his legs, and humming a monotonous Kaffir ditty. Besides being opposed to overwhelming numbers, he was without weapons of any description; while the Basutos had their knob-kerries, and one of their number was armed with a pickaxe.

The Basutos formed a semicircle round their intended victim, and commenced a kind of harangue; as soon as one man had finished speaking another taking the floor. This speech-making lasted some ten minutes, and was evidently intended to intimidate the Zulu, as the orations consisted of a repetition of threats of what they were going to do, and how it would be told in the Basuto kraals that their brave warriors had slain the Zulu cur like a rat in a hole, with more braggadocio of the same description. They then finished up with a string of opprobrious epithets, to none of which their foe vouchsafed so much as a glance in reply.

The Zulu had remained in the same impassive attitude, and with the same nonchalant bearing, during the whole of this bombastic speechifying; but when it was finished, and one of the Basutos made a step towards him with uplifted kerry, his manner underwent a striking change. With the swiftness of an arrow he sprang to his feet, and snatching up a heavy stone from the ground, he struck his adversary with it full in the face. The Basuto reeled backwards, and throwing up his arms in a vain effort to save himself, fell headlong into a claim thirty feet deep. Two of his comrades looked over after him; but seeing that he was beyond their assistance, his neck being broken, they brandished their weapons, and with cries of vengeance advanced to the attack.

There could have been but one termination to the conflict, as there were now six or seven men to the one Zulu; when, fortunately for the latter, a party of diggers, who had been watching the whole affair from a little distance, suddenly took it into their heads to interfere, and soon put the

Basutos to flight by a smart application of the flat part of their spades, thus leaving the Zulu in the possession of the field.

Whatever squabbles the natives may indulge in amongst themselves, they never venture to attack a European in the daytime; though, of course, it is scarcely safe to wander far away from the camp at night, as the temptation to plunder would in all probability be too great for their strength of mind to resist. However, an armed man may come and go, as he lists, at all hours of the day and night, without being molested, as the Kaffirs have a wholesome dread of a revolver, and being very indifferent marksmen themselves, look upon the superior skill of the whites with great awe.

I remember upon one occasion, when walking at night from Pniel to the New Rush, a distance of twenty-three miles, at a bend of the road near the Portuguese ruins, I came upon a party of ten or twelve Korannas sitting round a fire built under the shelter of a camel-thorn bush. The Korannas are the most treacherous and thievish in disposition of any of the tribes near the diamond fields, and are, moreover, notorious for their cruelty; and as I was some six or seven miles distant from the nearest habitation, and nearly all the Korannas were armed, I felt that I might have been in a safer situation. As I drew nearer to their fire, three or four men rose lazily to their feet, and swinging their knob-kerries carelessly about, sauntered along the road towards me.

When they were about ten paces distant, and I stood in the full glare of the fire, I unfastened the solitary button which held my coat across my breast, and let it flap back, displaying a formidable-looking revolver, with its row of glistening copper caps, and a long bowie knife in my belt. The hint was sufficient for them: they strolled back to their fire, and threw themselves on the ground beside it; while I passed on, and in a few minutes was buried once more in the darkness of the night, which seemed the more intense by comparison with the light I had just passed.

Looking back, I could see the fitful gleam of the firelight, and the dark figures of the Korannas moving in front of it; while every now and then I would stop to listen, fancying I could hear the cat-like tread of one of them close behind me, and expecting to feel the downward blow of a kerry every instant. But I saw them no more, and before long

another turn in the road hid their fire from sight.

Although but little baggage is required for a man proceeding to the diamond fields, still all the articles necessary for working are of such an awkward and cumbersome description as to make transportation a matter of some difficulty, unless the would-be digger owns a waggon, or sends his impedimenta by the goods transport waggons, which take a month or six weeks on the road before arriving at their destination.

The usual outfit consists of a square tent, a folding bedstead, pots, pans, and kettles, spades, pickaxes, sieves, and zinc buckets, to which are sometimes added a pair of mules and a light cart, these being a good source of income by being employed in carting away soil at prices varying from two to five shillings per load, according to the distance of the digger's sorting table from the kopje.

As nearly all the necessities of digger life can now be purchased at the New Rush, Du Toit's Pan, Pniel, or Klipdrift, it is by far the best plan to wait till one has arrived at the actual spot for work before investing in tent, tools, &c.; for although the prices are higher at the New Rush than at Cape Town, yet the expense of transporting baggage by waggon some eight hundred miles for a single party is so great as to counterbalance any saving that might be made.

With the ordinary digger, tables, chairs, and such luxuries are generally speaking dispensed with; and sometimes the bed also is regarded as a useless encumbrance, the digger rolling himself in his blankets and sleeping on the bare earth. Provisions, water, and drinkables of every description can now be obtained without difficulty; and there are so many dining saloons, of such varied and diverse character, that one can always find a restaurant suited to one's peculiar taste, and thus is able to avoid the discomfort and trouble of cooking in the tent.

The following extract from a digger's diary may be taken as affording a description of average life at the diamond fields:—

"Monday.—Went to the claim at 6 a.m.; worked with the pickaxe. Breakfasted. Sorted at the table for the rest of the day—'lickered.'

"Tuesday.—Sent the 'niggers' to the claim at daybreak. Met H—; he has

found a twenty-carat stone; we 'lickered.' Very hot day, thermometer 115° Fahrenheit; lime dust very annoying to-day. In the afternoon found a small stone, off-coloured—lickered the find. A mule and cart fell into the claims; the mule was killed.

"Wednesday.—Eyes very weak and sore, from the effects of the lime dust yesterday. Broke a piece of hardened lime near my tent, and found a five-carat stone; stood lick all round. Heard that G— died yesterday of fever.

"Thursday.—Found nothing; lickered for luck. A party of three diggers near me found a fifty-four-carat stone, very bad colour and cracked; they all lickered, and in rolling about on the ground when drunk, the stone was broken in pieces—rather hard lines. N.B.—Sometimes a bad diamond, if much flawed, will break up directly it is touched.

"Friday.—No luck. Lickered all day. A man fell into a claim in No. 6 road, and broke his neck. Great cheering.

"Saturday.—Frightfully close day; did not go to the claim, but sent the niggers, who found a splint. Terrific thunderstorm in the afternoon, with rain—my tent swamped, and everything wet through. A tent near me struck by lightning, but no one hurt.

"Sunday.—Washed my clothes for next week. Lickered. Nothing doing in the camp."

It will be seen above that "licker" forms a very considerable item in each week's expenditure; and, in fact, it is the custom to drink whenever one meets a friend or finds a diamond, and if nothing has been found one drinks for luck. One constantly sees drunken men reeling about the camp, or lying bare-headed on the ground under a burning sun; and, as the result of drinking so much execrable wine and spirit before and after working in the heat of the day, scores of men succumb to exposure, fever, and sunstroke, who would otherwise, in all probability, have remained in good health.

As it is, in the present state of affairs, the canteen keepers are the individuals into whose pockets most of the digger's hard-earned cash finds its way; and it is a common saying that "Cape smoke"—a villainous compound of alcohol, yclept brandy—kills more men than all the diseases put together.

The amount of illness caused by the lime dust, which is always floating about in the

air, and which on windy days becomes almost unbearable, is surprising; and even when unaccompanied by sickness, it is very annoying. It not only covers one with a layer of lime, but penetrates everywhere, even into a watch. So that nearly all watches stop after their owners have been a day or two in the fields.

This dust settles in and round the eyes, and causes them to become inflamed; then myriads of flies, which have been swarming on the putrid carcasses round the camp, settle on them, poisoning the eyes, and causing many people to lose their sight for a time, and some permanently. The consequence of breathing so much lime into the lungs is that inflammation sets in, and the result is frequently fatal. In a post-mortem examination which I saw performed on four men, the whole of the lungs and organs of the chest were covered with lime, which had literally eaten into the flesh.

Doubtless with skilful doctors many cases which now terminate fatally would have a different ending; but most of the so-called doctors at the diamond fields are men who, not having sufficient capital to buy a claim or set up a store, practise medicine according to their own ideas, without any knowledge of physic, and consequently kill nearly all their unfortunate patients.

In the closely packed city of tents, in the middle of the hot and dusty plain, human life is thought but little of; and everybody is so intent upon pushing onward in the race for wealth, that no one has time to spend in thinking about or alleviating the sufferings of his fellow-diggers, who may perhaps be languishing in the last stage of illness in the very next tent, without means to purchase the commonest necessities of life, abandoned by their Kaffirs, with no one to watch or tend them. And many are the unfortunates who, having been allured from their homes by the fables of marvellous wealth easily obtained, perish from neglect and starvation, separated only by a few strips of dirty canvas from the noisy, bustling world around them.

I was walking along one of the roads between the claims at the New Rush, one excessively sultry afternoon, with difficulty pushing my way through the crowd of dusty men and carts which encumbered the narrow and uneven road, when I was startled by a noise like the falling of an avalanche, and looking over in the direction of the sound,

I was horrified by the sight of a tremendous mass of earth and stones, forming the side of several claims, and weighing several hundred tons, sliding down upon a party of natives at work beneath.

The whole affair was but the work of a few seconds. With a terrific roar and crash, the earth fell in, burying under its enormous weight two Kaffirs, who, seeing their impending fate, had vainly endeavoured to escape. A crowd of diggers gathered on the scene of the accident, laughing at three other natives, who, more fortunate than their companions, had escaped comparatively unhurt, and who, mad with terror, were trying to scale the perpendicular face of the opposite side of the claim.

No one offered to exhume the men buried in the ruins of the claim.

"It's none of our business; what does it matter, two niggers more or less?"

Some of the spectators amused themselves by chaffing and pitching pebbles down on the terrified Kaffirs, who were trying to climb up, screaming with laughter whenever they missed their footing, and fell down, bruised, to the bottom of the claim.

This was no unusual sight at the diggings. Familiarity with death makes men callous; and in a few minutes the crowd had dispersed and almost forgotten the incident, only to collect again whenever any fresh diversion should take place somewhere else.

It is perhaps only fair to say that it is only the rougher class of Boer diggers who treat and regard their native servants as something below a horse or a dog, and who set no more value on their lives than on the life of one of their own sheep. The majority of the diggers are of English and colonial birth, and are mostly found from the middle classes; and the few bad characters about the camp, or "loafers," as they are called in colonial parlance, are the idlers and vagrants who are found in all parts of the world on the outskirts of civilization.

Fortunately, there are not many white desperadoes at the fields of a type similar to those who infested the Californian "placers," and I only met one during my stay at the diggings, most of the camp loafers confining themselves to making off with property from tents during the absence of the owners, and then getting drunk on the proceeds of their booty for the next three or four days, only seeking for plunder when they are unable to obtain their beloved "Cape Smoke."

My rencontre with a full-blown villain took place as follows. When I had been but a few days at the New Rush, having arrived from the river diggings at Pniel, I was struck down by fever, the seeds of which had been sown by long nights of sleeping in the open air in all seasons, by bad food, and the heat and exposure generally. The fever had lasted for nearly a fortnight; according to all the rules of the camp I ought to have been dead or cured in half that time, when one day I recovered from my delirium, and took a turn for the better.

It was about nine o'clock at night; the moon had risen, and through the raised flap of the tent, which was pitched on the outskirts of the camp, I could, as I lay on my pile of gritty blankets, look on to the vast treeless expanse, bounded by the low hills on the distant horizon, and lighted as only a South African moon can light such a scene. There had been a thunder shower but a short time before, and the cool evening breeze, so unusual on the sun-scorched "veldt," was cooling the heated atmosphere. Nothing was to be heard but the distant hum of the vast encampment, and the monotonous tinkling of the ground beetle on the plain outside. My tent companion had, contrary to my wishes, gone to one of the quack doctors of the camp to get some medicine which he considered necessary for me, and had placed near my hand my loaded revolver—more for the sake of appearances than anything else, as I had not strength left in me to raise it, much less to aim at anything, and the veriest jackal would have been more than my match.

I was lying very still, looking at the moonlit plain, but with my thoughts far distant, when the view was suddenly obscured by the figure of a man; and a dirty, red face, with a profusion of unkempt hair and beard, was thrust into the opening. He watched me for a minute or two, and then, looking cautiously around to see if he was observed, stepped inside the tent. He was a short, thickset man, of about forty, with his hair and beard covered with the dust of the diggings, so that their original colour was barely distinguishable, with his coarse woollen shirt thrown open, displaying a broad, hairy chest, browned by exposure to the sun, and scarred with numerous wounds, and in his greasy digger's belt was thrust a most villainous-looking butcher's knife.

"What do you want?" I asked, making a

feeble effort to raise myself and grasp my revolver.

"Oh, just come in to have a look round," he replied, with a chuckle, as he removed my weapon and stuck it in his belt.

I tried to shout; but my voice was weak, and the nearest tents were some little distance off; but the effort startled him, and he half drew his knife from its sheath.

"Shut up!" he growled; "if you don't keep quiet, this will soon settle all that," and he grinned as he significantly tapped the hilt of his bowie.

I saw it was useless—I was quite at his mercy; and I watched him anxiously, fearing that he would want to search under the blankets on which I was lying, where were hidden my few diamonds, the result of many weeks' hard labour, and to obtain which I had undergone much hardship. He turned over the few articles in the tent, growling and blaspheming—for there was nothing there worth his taking—when he accidentally saw a ring on my hand, and knelt down to drag it off. I fancied I heard footsteps outside, and, exerting all my feeble powers, shouted—

"Help!"

"Confound you!" muttered my adversary, striking me a blow in the face with his clenched fist as I lay back, that drove all the remaining strength out of my body, and left me half stunned. Then he stopped to listen. I had not been mistaken: I had heard footsteps, and the passers-by had heard my cry, and were hurrying to the tent. The robber sprang to his feet, and, with a wrench that nearly dragged my finger from its socket, strove to tear off the ring; but it had not been removed for years, and it held fast.

He then put his hand to his knife, intending to cut off my finger, since he could not secure his plunder any other way, when at that moment two figures darkened the tent opening. It was my companion, with the doctor, who had returned with him. The ruffian saw he had no time to lose, and with a deep curse dashed against the side of the tent, tearing up the tent pegs, and bringing the whole edifice down about our ears; and by the time my comrade had disengaged himself from the fallen canvas, the "loafer" had escaped far away on to the plain, and was almost lost to sight. It was useless to follow him; nor did we ever see him again.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER XLIX.

SIR JOHN MIDDLETON having died intestate, the whole of his property, real and personal, passed to his heir-at-law, Mrs. Woodward; and the title, in default of male issue, became extinct.

When the unsigned will was read, it was discovered that it had been the baronet's intention to have settled five thousand a-year upon Augusta for her life, whether she became his wife or not. But although Lady Georgina insisted much on the obligation that rested upon children to fulfil the wishes of their parents, even when not legally compelled to do so, the heiress declined to look upon the matter in any such light, or in any-wise acknowledge that it was incumbent upon her to carry out what might, after all, have been but a passing whim and not a settled intention of her late father.

Mr. Woodward thoroughly agreed with his wife in her view of the matter; and as the law was entirely on their side, poor Augusta's legacy, or settlement, fell to the ground.

There was another provision of the will, however, which Charles felt it to be his duty to fulfil, namely—to add the name of Middleton to his own; and this he did in due course.

For my part, I remained in London until after the funeral, by my host's special request. The obsequies of the deceased baronet, as Lady Georgina would have said, were performed on a scale of mournful magnificence.

All the ex-colonists of any note in London attended, as did also many members of Parliament; while the Premier sent his carriage to join the funeral cortege. A deputation of the tenantry from Ultima Thule also assisted, headed by the agent; and all but innumerable visits of condolence were paid during the next few days by highly distinguished personages.

The Woodward-Middletons returned to Ireland the week after the funeral, and I accompanied them.

There is no place like home, after all; and I was but too well pleased to exchange the oppressive grandeur of Cromwell-road for the coziness of St. Mary's, as my house was called.

The weather, too, had set in fine; and I

never felt more kindly disposed towards Dumfarnaghalee than I did on my return from London.

Notwithstanding their position in the county, the Woodward-Middletons, after the first feeling of curiosity had subsided, were not much visited, and no intimacy sprang up between them and the neighbouring families; so that I rather wondered at their prolonged stay at Ardmore.

I fancy, however, they found living cheaper there than in the metropolis; and ways and means, notwithstanding their wealth, were not at all overlooked by the newly-married pair, who maintained but a very moderate establishment in the country; and, greatly to the agent's disgust, after having discharged Mackey, the gardener, had the parterres turned into a kitchen garden, the produce of which was regularly sent to the markets in Pennyletter or Banntown. We were not surprised, however, to learn, after the lapse of three months or so, that some important business matters necessitated the return of the ex-rector and his wife to England.

July had come round again, and the first had even passed off almost without comment, and entirely without disturbance.

The Orangemen, of course, had held their customary gathering, and had joined, much to their own contentment, in their annual procession, with drums and fifes, and flaunting banners commemorative of the day; but the Catholics, who had vastly increased in numbers since my first acquaintance with the district, owing to the establishment of several factories in the town, had kept within doors, and had taken no notice of the proceedings—which, I must say, were conducted in as orderly and inoffensive a manner as was compatible with the nature of things.

A deputation of the leading Orangemen of the district had waited upon the curate, Mr. La Touche—the rector, as usual, being absent, in Dublin or elsewhere—to request that he would hold a commemoration service in the parish church on the twelfth; but he had refused, not peremptorily or ungraciously, but decidedly, though not without an ineffectual attempt to convince the delegates of their error in attempting to perpetuate religious feuds.

Upon their withdrawal, a consultation took place in the Orange Hall—a building originally erected to serve the purpose of a barn, in the back-yard of one of the houses

in the town, but which was usually empty during the summer, and devoted to the use of the order.

It was unanimously resolved at the meeting, that, as their own parish church was to be closed against them, the Orange Lodges should march into Pennyletter, and attend the service to be celebrated there by the rector of the parish, who was an enthusiastic admirer and supporter of the order.

The celebrations of the first having passed off quietly, it was not anticipated by our usually astute and far-seeing sergeant of police that there would be any disturbance on the twelfth, especially as the church was to be closed, and had not even the wonted Orange flag upon its spire; and he therefore declined the offer of a reinforcement from Banntown for the day.

The anniversary came round at last; and the sun rose, warm and ruddy-tinted, in a cloudless sky. The trees and hedges, as well as the various crops, yet retained their freshness; the larks carolled merrily in mid-air, and wood-pigeons cooed their plaintive notes in the plantations that surrounded the castle, where also the cattle sought a refuge from the unwonted heat; and all nature seemed buried in the profoundest security and peace.

Soon, however, the uncertain sound of distant music was heard, growing louder and more distinguishable as the performers neared the town, where the pattering of many feet had become sufficiently audible, as the various lodges of the district mustered in full force. All business was suspended, as a matter of course, and pleasure was the order of the day.

The window blinds of the house occupied close to the chapel by Father O'Rafferty were drawn down; but the reverend gentleman was known to be not an early riser, so that little notice was taken of that ominous circumstance at the time.

The Roman Catholics stood, many of them, at their doors and windows, and gazed upon the scene, without betraying the least symptom of annoyance or irritation.

The police-sergeant was busily occupied in taking private notes, without the slightest inkling of the tragedy that was so soon to follow.

As I have said, the day was beautifully fine, and every one was, or appeared to be, in the best of spirits; and after performing a half defiant, half complimentary serenade

before the curate's house, the whole party, numbering some two hundred men and lads, set out in orderly procession for Pennyletter.

That town contains a good many Roman Catholic inhabitants, and the police had taken every precaution to render a collision between the opposing factions impossible; and apparently with entire success, for the principal streets of the town were traversed by the Orangemen before they assembled in the churchyard, without provoking even comment from the other side.

Morning service was performed in the parish church, and at its conclusion a stirring sermon was preached by the rector. If he did not preach with the eloquence of Charles Woodward, Mr. M'Neece made up in invective for what he lacked in rhetorical effect; and, perhaps for that very reason, made a deep impression on his congregation, the members whereof, at the conclusion of the harangue, adjourned to neighbouring public-houses to drink his reverence's health, before returning to their homes.

The Dumfernaghalee and Moighrath parties, of course, marched in company; and about half-past four o'clock, after a general muster in the market-place, took leave of their friends, and set out on their homeward journey, in a boisterous and excitable state of mind as to the generality, while not a few were pretty well intoxicated.

The other party, however, made no sign; in fact, they held themselves entirely aloof, and not the slightest disturbance took place, although a great deal of offensive language was indulged in by their opponents.

The authorities, therefore, and all who deprecated such celebrations, were congratulating themselves upon the peaceable issue of the day's proceedings; but, as the sequel showed, a trifle too soon—for there were yet some hours to sunset, in which much mischief might be done.

About two miles out of Dumfernaghalee, on the Pennyletter side, is a steep hill, part of which has been quarried away; but the workings were then in disuse, and not visible from, although quite close to, the road; and here a large body of Romanists, from our own and surrounding districts, had collected under the covert leadership of Father O'Rafferty, presumably with no worse intention than that of giving the Orangemen a fright.

Be that as it may, however, there is no

doubt as to which side began the fray; that point was clearly proved before the commission sent down to inquire into the matter: the first blood was drawn by the Romanists, and the first weapons used by them were stones, which had been gathered into convenient heaps, and were liberally hurled at the unsuspecting and altogether unprepared Orange "boys."

Taken by surprise, as they were, it is not to be wondered at that the Protestants were thrown into confusion by the first assault of their adversaries; but they presently rallied, and soon turned the tables on the Romish party, whom they charged with such vigour as to drive them back into the quarry, where a hand-to-hand encounter ensued between the opposing factions, in which many hard blows were inflicted on either side.

Then it was that Father O'Rafferty, who, as I conjecture, had not calculated upon being seen by the Protestants, made his appearance on the scene as the leader and champion of his party; and with a large blackthorn, which he habitually carried, laid about him with no feeble hand, urging his flock, in a loud voice, to renewed efforts.

No sooner had the repulsed Catholics heard the voice and witnessed the prowess of their leader, than they rallied, and drove their antagonists back again on to the road.

Then—it was never ascertained to a certainty which was the guilty one in this respect—a shot was fired, but happily without effect; and at the same instant the priest rushed forward and put his foot through one of the drums, at the same time dealing its bearer a violent blow on the head with his formidable blackthorn.

A cry immediately arose that the man was killed, and some one—probably without reflecting on what he was about to do—plucked a pistol from his breast, and firing, apparently at random, shot the priest through the heart.

An indescribable panic immediately seized upon the whole of the combatants, who fled, as with one accord, in every direction, leaving the unfortunate father lying where he had fallen.

It so chanced that I had that day been to visit a patient at no great distance from the scene of the murderous affray, and was returning home, accompanied by a messenger to bring back some medicine, when we heard the noise and shouting, and imagined the

boys were having, as they often did, "a sham fight" among themselves.

On turning the corner, however, that led into the quarry, we were surprised to see no one; and horrified, a little farther on, by finding a lifeless body lying in the middle of the way, which body, on examination, turned out to be that of the priest.

He was dead.

I was about to move him to one side of the road, and called upon my companion to assist me; but he was so frightened, and begged me so hard not to touch the body, that I, rather unwillingly, left it where it had evidently fallen, and hurried on with the farmer to give information of the sad occurrence to the police.

The sergeant at once called out his men, and requesting us to accompany him, proceeded without loss of time to Quarry Hill.

Some one had undoubtedly visited the place since we had been there; for the priest's body had been turned over on to its face, whereas we had found it lying on its back.

An inquest was held, with as little delay as possible, when numerous witnesses were examined, with the usual result of contradictory evidence; the proceedings terminating with a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown.

A large reward was offered for the apprehension of the guilty party; who, as I have said, was never certainly known—suspected as he was by a good many; but nothing whatever could be proved against him.

I learned, subsequently, who it was that fired the fatal shot, and helped him out of the country—thereby, I suppose, rendering myself an accomplice after the fact—but what matter? poor Isaac was as mild and harmless a fellow as ever broke bread—the whole affair was a lamentable accident, and hanging the lad would not restore the priest to life.

That day's events, however, led to parliamentary intervention, in the shape of the Party Processions Act, than which none ever caused more heart-burning or ill-feeling in the north.

CHAPTER L.

FOR some time past I had experienced a feeling of weariness and general dissatisfaction with my lot. Dumfermahalee had not come up to my expectations. I was disappointed, in fact; and had lately

begun to imagine that I was possessed with an irresistible longing to visit once more my native land; but it was not so.

Beyond my bare salary, and certain emoluments arising from duties performed, or supposed to be performed, at the castle, I had not succeeded in shaking down much fruit from the flourishing tree of pecuniary success; and I am afraid I regarded with somewhat of a jealous eye the achievements of Dr. Watson of Pennyletter in that respect, forgetting that he was a man of thirty years standing in the county, whereas I was but as a thing of yesterday. So that, apart from the unpleasantness arising out of the O'Rafferty affair, I do not think I could have remained much longer in Ultima Thule; as it was, my exodus had become a matter of necessity.

On the 13th of July, I received a telegram from Charles, summoning me instantly to Cromwell-road; but I was bound to give evidence at the inquest, under I know not what pains and penalties; and the coroner absolutely refused either to take my evidence beforehand, or to permit me to leave the town.

I believe in so doing he exceeded his powers, but I am not sure; at any rate, I was obliged to remain.

Surely I was born to be unfortunate! Why had I left Gilliland's farm at the time I did? Why was I the first to discover the dead body? And why, especially, did I not carry out my original intention of then removing it from the middle to the side of the road? Why, indeed! But who can control his destiny?

The coroner abused me shamefully; took, in fact, every advantage his position gave him to insult and injure me. He said that I had left the unfortunate man to perish by the roadside, when a little common attention on my part might have saved, or at all events prolonged, his life.

In vain I protested that the man was dead, quite dead, when I found him.

"How, then, had he turned round?" asked the coroner, launching out into a violent diatribe against "religious intolerance and bigotry."

I replied that some one must have turned the body after I had left the spot.

"Was it likely," the coroner demanded in scornful accents—"was it likely such a person would not come forward?"

I thought it was not only likely, but cer-

tain, that he would not; but the coroner insisted upon the contrary being the case, and persisted in throwing the blame of the priest's death upon me; so that two of the jurymen were, I am told, for bringing me in guilty of manslaughter, but were overruled by the other ten, though not without considerable difficulty.

In vain Mr. Gilliland, a highly respectable Quaker farmer, corroborated my evidence; the coroner would scarcely listen to a word he said, and announced his intention of communicating with the Poor Law Commissioners—which august body, I have not the slightest doubt, would have gladly carried out his suggestion, could they have found any legal grounds for dismissing me.

As it was, however, they harassed and obstructed me as much as they possibly could in the discharge of my duties; so that I was at last compelled, in self-defence, to hand in my resignation to the committee, by whom it was very reluctantly accepted.

Mr. Dobbie and myself were duly acquainted with the fact of the advent of a heir to the Middleton estates, and great preparations were accordingly made for a due celebration of the auspicious event; when a startling occurrence took place, which completely changed the aspect of affairs as regards many of the persons mentioned in the foregoing pages.

TABLE TALK.

GOOD news for losers of umbrellas—which, of course, means everybody. A man advertises—"Why have a new silk umbrella? Have yours (by whatever maker) recovered." Exactly—to be sure: the very thing. One would not wish for anything better than to have one's lost umbrella recovered. Of course, everybody wishes to know the recoverer of these lost silk umbrellas, so we hasten to—Bah! what a pity to begin writing before reading the rest of the advertisement—"And the splitting at the folds entirely prevented for the future." It is only the notice of an umbrella mender, after all.

THE FASHIONABLE DRAPERS are advertising a new serge costume for ladies, to be called "The Plimsoll." Can't the outfitters provide our sailors with a good neat cork jacket, to help them through their difficulties? That would deserve to be called

"The Plimsoll," indeed. But avast there! "Ship ahoy!"

MISS LITTON'S BUSINESS manager sends to the papers the following curt advertisement:—"Court.—'Alone:.' a great success." If the reader ignores the punctuation, he is compelled to stumble over the paradoxical piece of imperative advice, "Court Alone!" It is all very well to inform him that it is a great success. That is a matter of question, unless the courter be of the nature of that classical young gentleman who fell in love with his own reflection. There is another interpretation, though. "Court Alone" might certainly be a success, if it meant without any lookers-on.

"LOOK ON THIS picture, and on this":—

"CARDIFF.—The Fifth of November has passed by apparently unnoticed. Not a single 'Guy Fawkes' has been observed in the streets. The principal feature of the day was a heavy rain, which came down incessantly from an early hour."

"LEWES.—Lighted rockets are thrown at windows or cast recklessly and laughingly amongst women's dresses, are stamped out by the rough heels of the Sussex peasants, and are scattered into the very faces of infants in arms, who are actually permitted to be dragged into the intoxicating orgie, and may howl whilst their mothers gape at the feu d'enfer. There is no respect of persons or sex. The women shake the sparks out of their dresses, guard the faces of their babies with a simple but affectionate hand; and the men, with eyes protected by spectacles, or their faces by masks, are exceedingly cool—though, if occasion needs it, kind. As I watch this terrible and most lawless sight, suffocated with the fumes of the blazing bonfire, and almost deafened by the incessant detonating fireworks, I can well see how shocking must have been the brief period of the Parisian Commune. Even these Lewes peasants are turned into fiends. . . . Positively it baffles all description, and those who had not been up to this moment suffocated by the sulphurous smoke, or deafened by the crackers, had difficulty in grasping the meaning of this wild carnival procession. In advance came a band of pioneers, casting up coloured rockets and varied Roman candles; then a semi-military, half-intoxicated brass band, out of tune and discordant; then a motley crowd of devils, clergymen,

soldiers, sailors, Greek pirates, highwaymen, scavengers, scarlet executioners from 'Marino Faliero,' clowns, niggers, and, in the rear, quite a dozen of blazing tar-barrels on trucks, each with the inside filled with flame, and suggestive for an instant of every horror of the Inquisition and Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs.' It was playing at something terrible. There were no martyrs to burn, or foes to murder; but the spirit of cruelty was up, and what with fire, sulphur, smoke, noise, and riot, if any offending party had been caught he would have instantly been consigned to the flames."

A THRILLING DRAMA was being played a few nights since at one of the transpontine theatres. The scene was as follows:—A study. Time, the witching hour of night. Old gentleman sitting at table, intently perusing a book. The villain of the piece emerges through a sliding panel, knife in hand. He silently steals towards his victim—hovers o'er him, evidently searching for a soft spot. Having satisfied himself as to the old man's vulnerability, a sardonic smile illumines his visage; orchestra during this preliminary proceeding piling up the agony with most unearthly music. The villain raises his knife for the sanguinary deed, when one of the "great unwashed" in the gallery shouts, at the top of his voice, "Look behind yer, guv'nor!" The effect on the risible faculties of the audience may be imagined.

THAT OUR ANCESTORS were not averse to a favourite Christmas dish is evinced by the following notice in a paper of 1781:—"Oct. 20. Ann Hodson begs leave to inform her friends that she this day begins to make minced pies, and hopes for their favours." It shows their sense.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, from by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Part, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 308.

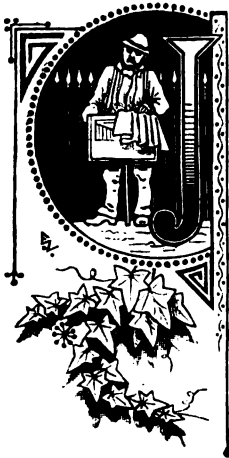
November 22, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER LII.

A SEARCH.



JANE'S cries brought all the servants round. One said the child was hiding; and the cook declared you might depend upon it that the little fellow had got hold of something to eat, and had gone to sleep in a corner.

"It's what I should have done," she continued, spitefully, "if I had been neglected by my nuss."

"He's a playing at hide and seek, bless him," said the housemaid; "he's got in amongst some of the curtains."

Here Buttons broke in, and nearly sent Jane into hysterics by proclaiming his opinion, and letting the cat out of the bag as regarded some of his own mischievous pranks.

"I know where he is," he exclaimed.

"Oh, where? tell me directly, there's a good boy," exclaimed Jane.

"He's been upstairs a-playing with the ballcock of the big cistern, and tumbled in and got drowned."

"Oh!" shrieked the maids, in chorus.

"Couldn't get in: door's always locked," said Mr. Sellars, gruffly.

"How dare you, you imp!" exclaimed cook, shaking her fist at Buttons in an exasperated fashion. "You turned me quite cold all over, I do declare. Don't you do it again, Eddard, that's all."

"Well, I don't care," cried the boy, backing out of reach; "he allers liked hearing the water fizzle and squirk."

"Then you must have took him there when I didn't know it," cried Jane, who looked ghastly pale.

"Shouldn't have asked me to mind him, then," grumbled the boy. Then, firing up once more—"I know, then, he's got in the bath-room trying the taps."

The under-housemaid rushed off at this suggestion, and had got halfway up a flight of stairs before she learned that the bath-room had been searched.

"Hadn't we better go reg'lar through the house?" said Mr. Sellars—"leastways, if this is really a lost child; because it's no good making ourselves hot for nothing."

"Oh, yes—yes—yes, I'm sure it's true; my poor dear boy's gone!" sobbed Jane.

"Well—well—well, my dear," said the cook, "don't take on like that till we find out for certain as he's gone. And he can't be gone, you know, can he?"

Mr. Sellars shook his head ominously, and took snuff.

"Then let's search from beginning to end, and from top to bottom of the place," said cook, who was stout; and she set an example by making Buttons bring her a chair, in which she sat down and wiped her face. Then, seeming to awaken to the incongruity of her proceedings, she added, "It's not much I can do, because my dinner would spoil."

"I tell you what," said Mr. Sellars, then, as he flicked away a few grains of dirt from his coat, "I'm very glad, Jane, that I don't stand in your shoes."

"Oh, please—please—please, don't!" sobbed Jane. "Oh, what shall I do—what shall I do!"

"Then come along of us," said Mr. Sellars, good-humouredly. "Let's all have a good look. We shall find him fast asleep, like that there young chap in the poem as

minded sheep, you know—him as you sing about, Jane. Come along, all of you."

And then, headed by the butler, the servants spread themselves about the house, without system or order, half of them devoting themselves to the dining-room, which had been searched before; and here they looked in every impossible place—one peering into the coal-scuttle, another up the chimney, while one enthusiastic housemaid looked under the hearth rug, and began to take up the carpet at one corner.

"It aint any use to look in the ice safe," said Mr. Sellars, pondering over it for a few moments, "because there's six bottles of champagne in it, and the lid's locked."

"It would be best to make sure," said the housemaid.

"Think so?" said Mr. Sellars, musing; and then, as the others gathered round the great brass-bound sarcophagus-like piece of furniture, dark looks and nods went round, and the maids gave a little shriek of horror.

"Depend upon it, he's in there," said one.

"Oh, poor dear," said another, "it's just like the mistletoe bough, as shut with a spring, you know."

"But I don't expect to find him in here," said Mr. Sellars, solemnly, as he fumbled with his keys. "I don't see how he could get in when it was locked."

"Oh, I don't know, Mr. Sellars," said the housemaid. "But do, pray, make haste, or the poor dear will be smothered if he is there, you know."

Thereupon Mr. Sellars fumbled a little longer with his keys, and at last opened the outer lid of the safe, pausing for a moment before raising the inner lid, to disclose, of course, nothing.

"Ah!" There was a sigh of relief, long drawn out, and the conversation once more began to flow.

"There'll be a pretty to-do when they come home," said Mr. Sellars, whom the non-discovery of the child in the ice safe had somewhat put out of temper.

They, of course, signified Sir Richard and Lady Lawler; and this brought up so awful a picture before the mind's eye of Jane, that she went off into shrieking hysterics—no sham ladylike faintings and fancies, but into a wild, horrible fit.

"Oh, what a brute you must be to talk like that to the poor girl!" cried the motherly cook, whom the noise brought up panting

into the dining-room. "I can't think what stuff you men can be made of, to go and worry the poor dear like that, when she's in such trouble. Mr. Sellars, I'm ashamed of you!"

Mr. Sellars did not condescend to reply, but looked majestically on while the maids half led, half carried Jane upstairs to her bed, where she lay at last, trembling and exhausted, while the servants now searched thoroughly from basement to attic—not forgetting the cistern and bath-room, but without the sinister results anticipated by the page, who seemed to be nervously anxious that the little fellow might be found floating in three feet of water.

Then the area was carefully examined. Mr. Sellars insisting upon the page feeling every spike of the iron railings.

"He might have fallen out of window on to the railings," he said, "and then have been carried off to the orspittle."

"Oh, for goodness gracious sake, don't talk like that, Mr. Sellars," exclaimed cook; "it gives one quite a turn. But now you are at it, you'd better see that he aint fallen out of window behind."

This suggestion gave somebody else a turn; but ended in a delightful task to the youthful mind of Buttons, who, upon this, was allowed to climb out of a staircase window on to the back leads, and explore amongst the various skylights and gutters; but little Clive had not overbalanced himself and fallen out of a back window, so the searchers were still at fault.

"The pore little dear's either fast asleep, or lying somewhere dumbly asking for our help," said cook, who was of a poetical turn of mind. "I don't know where else we could look."

"Nor I neither," said Henry.

"Nor I," said Mr. Sellars.

"Why, we aint looked a-top o' the house," said Buttons, anticipatory of another exploring treat, though the last had not much improved his livrery.

"Go along," said cook; "how could he get up there?"

"Swarmed up the water-pipes," said Buttons, stoutly.

"Get along," said cook again; "and now you be off with your dratted impudence, and get yourself clean before her ladyship comes home."

"Then he's seen the sweeps, some time when they've been," cried the irrepressible

youth; and then he dodged out of sight to avoid a shaking, shouting as he went, "He's stuck somewhere in one of the flues, see if he aint."

"That boy's horrible, that he is," said one of the housemaids; and then she turned to the sage Sellars, as they all stood together in the hall, for that gentleman had gathered himself up to speak.

"I dursten't tell Sir Richard and her ladyship," he said, at last.

"Nor I nayther," said Henry. "Let them as lost him do that."

"Ugh, you brute!" exclaimed the cook, "how can she?"

"I didn't say nothing about any *she's*," said the under-butler, surlily; "I said *them* as lost him."

"And it's not me that's going to take the credit," exclaimed Fanny, acidly; and then, overcome by her feelings, she began to weep copiously into her apron. "I'm sure I don't know anything about it, only that Jehe-he-hane asked me to look at him in the—the de-de-de-dining-room. And I don't even know as the little thing wasn't stolen away, and not lost at all. If he wasn't, what was the window left open for?"

"That's it—that's it!" said Mr. Sellars, sagaciously, as he adopted the girl's idea, and set it forth embellished as his own invention. "Depend upon it, there's a mystery here. Our house has been infested with strangers and ill-looking people lately; men with things to sell, orgin men, and imidge men, and foreign-looking chaps, that only seemed to be hanging about for a chance. I thought they meant the plate, but it wasn't that; they meant that child, and it strikes me as they've got him."

"Oh, yes, yes, yes!" shrieked a voice, in tones that made the servants, intent the moment before upon the words of the butler, start as if by a galvanic shock. "Yes, yes, that's it; he's stolen away! That Frenchman! that Frenchman! he must have done it! He said—he said—he—oh!—oh!—oh!"

Jane had come down while they were standing together, and taken them unawares. Her face was ghastly white, and distorted with fear; her long black hair was streaming down her back; and after uttering the above incoherent remarks, she finished off with a series of wild shrieks, demonstrative as the rest of her class when in a state of trouble.

Now began a fresh scene, water being fetched, and the maids joining in chorus, of

"Pore dear, then!" and "Do adone, then," without much avail; in the midst of which a great dread fell upon all present. For there was the sound of wheels; a carriage drew up smartly at the door; there was the usual mercurial imitation of the Jovean thunder at the knocker, the accompanying peal at the bell—both so thoroughly necessary in aristocratic life; the door was opened in fear and trembling by the dough-faced butler; and Sir Richard and Lady Lawler made their appearance upon the scene.

CHAPTER LIII.

QUERY—REVENGE?

THE baronet and his lady came in cheerful and light-hearted; some remark had been made which had set Sir Richard laughing, and he was making some reply, when the dismayed faces of the servants attracted his attention.

"Hallo! what the deuce is the matter now?" he exclaimed.

"There is nothing the matter with Master Clive, is there?" cried Lady Lawler, anxiously.

But to neither was a reply made—the maids slinking away, and Sellars standing pale and scared, opening and closing his great fishy mouth, but without giving vent to a sound.

"Did you hear what I said?" exclaimed Sir Richard. "What is the matter?"

Still there was no answer; and, never the man to brook what he looked upon as a slight to his orders, Sir Richard caught the old butler by his collar, and shook him violently.

"What is it, you scoundrel? Speak, will you?" he roared.

"Please Sir Rich-ich-ichard," stuttered the butler, "it's-it's the ch-ch-ch-ild!"

Lady Lawler uttered a piercing cry, and staggered back to one of the hall chairs, while Sir Richard let his hands fall from his old servant's collar, to stand as if petrified.

He recovered himself, though, in a moment, to say—

"Is he ill?"

"No, Sir Richard," said the under-butler, in fear and trembling; "we think he's been stole away."

Once more the stony, paralyzed look stole over Sir Richard Lawler's face, as he stood staring straight before him at some imaginary scene.

"Go on—speak. Tell me all about it,"

he said at last, impatiently; and the man repeated all he knew, growing voluble over it as he gained confidence, and told of the different places they had searched, and ending by repeating Jane's words.

It had come, then, at last: there could be no doubt about it. Rivière had threatened that he would strike at him through his tenderest susceptibilities, though he had not thought then of what he might mean. Here, then, was the attack: he had struck at him through his child, he had taken the little fellow away. What for? What would he do? Good God! he would never murder the little curly-haired darling in cold blood!

Sir Richard shivered for a few moments, like one suffering from ague; but it was only for a few moments; then he recovered himself, for he felt that it was time for action.

"Go to your room," he said, sharply, to Lady Lawler, as she stood by his side, the image of despair—making no sign, uttering no cry, only listening greedily to all that was said; the mother's feelings seeming to flash out from her eyes in the long, eager, hungry look she directed at each speaker in turn.

"Go to your room," Sir Richard said again; for she neither moved nor seemed as if she had heard his words.

"Addy, do you hear me?" he said, firmly, but not in an unkind tone; "go to your room."

"Oh, no, no, no!" she exclaimed, piteously. "Do let me stay. I may be of use. Let me stop and help. I will be quite calm. What will you do first, Richard?"

To his great surprise, instead of turning hysterical, and engrossing the aid of all around, Lady Lawler seemed to rise to the occasion; and, in a quiet, determined way, came to his side and laid her hand upon his arm.

"Come into the dining-room for a few minutes," he said, hoarsely, and leading the way. Lady Lawler followed him, and closed the door.

The next moment she was by her husband's side, with her hands clasped upon his shoulder.

"Dick, darling," she whispered, in a sweet, subdued voice, "this is my fault—all my fault. I have been a weak, silly woman, but I've not been wicked. This is a punishment for my folly and vanity. Try to forgive me; for, come what may, it will be a lesson for life."

Sir Richard's face worked as he listened to her words, and for reply he took her in his arms, kissed her forehead, and then sternly set himself to the work in hand.

"What shall you do first?" she whispered.

"Question that woman," he said, almost harshly. "Ring."

Lady Lawler flew to the bell, which was answered on the instant.

"Send that woman in here," said Sir Richard.

The butler shrank away trembling; and then for a few minutes Sir Richard paced the room. Then he stopped short; for a buzz of voices and hysterical cries were heard, as if descending the stairs.

Directly after, the door was opened, and, supported on either side by Sellars and the under-butler, Jane was led in, pale and horrified, to glance from Sir Richard to her lady, and back again; when, apparently overcome with dread, she flung herself upon her knees, wildly begging for forgiveness—her words half heard amidst inarticulate cries and sobs.

"Silence, woman!" cried Sir Richard, so savagely that the poor girl shivered and crouched closer to the floor, holding one arm above her head, as if to shield herself from the storm of wrath that she knew to be at hand. "Now," he continued, "tell me the whole truth. How did this happen?"

He paused for a reply, but none came; then, stamping his foot fiercely, Jane started and half shrieked—

"Oh, yes—yes—I will—will tell. I—I—left him—in the dining—oh!—oh!—oh!"

Here a burst of wild hysterical cries and sobs burst from her, and every attempt to get further information proved vain.

"Send for the police at once," exclaimed Sir Richard.

"No—no—no!" shrieked the poor girl, frantically; and, grovelling along the ground, she worked herself to the feet of Lady Lawler. "Don't, don't—pray don't send me to prison, my lady; oh, pray, pray, speak for me!"

"Tell us all you know, then," said Lady Lawler, sinking into a chair, a completely changed woman, and taking the poor girl's hands in hers.

"Oh, yes, my lady—my dear lady," sobbed Jane, piteously; "I did love him so, my lady—my own dear boy! The window—oh, the window! Oh! oh!—don't, don't send me to prison," she sobbed, her

voice growing hoarser each moment with her hysterical cries, till she lay, with wild eyes and distorted face, glancing from one to the other, and clinging tightly to Lady Lawler's hands.

"She thinks you mean to have the police to take her," said Lady Lawler. "Say a few words to her gently, Richard."

"Police—yes," exclaimed Sir Richard; "and she deserves it, too. She must have been neglecting her duty. Now, then, some of you, who can speak? Let me hear all about it from the beginning."

Half a dozen voices began at once; but, by silencing some and encouraging others, he obtained as perfect a statement as was possible.

"As I expected," exclaimed Sir Richard, bitterly; "she was neglecting her duty."

Jane uttered a loud wail.

"The child—*my* child—was left here in the dining-room, while this woman went no one knows where. How do we know but she was in league with that scoundrel who has taken him away? Now, Henry, quick—here! Stand aside, you fat mass of helplessness," he roared, as Mr. Sellars came cumbrously forward. "Now, let's search the house from top to bottom; he may still be here."

Closely followed by Lady Lawler and the under-butler, Sir Richard now thoroughly searched the house from garret to basement—in fact, this was the first thorough search; but, though cupboards were opened, beds felt, and the very cellars examined, there was no result; and the parents stood face to face with the bitter fact that the child was gone.

In the meantime, Jane had been half led, half carried to her bed in the night nursery, where one of the servants stayed with her till a doctor, who had been summoned, came, and administered a sedative, with the result that in a short time the poor girl had fallen into a deep sleep.

CHAPTER LIV.

GIVING EVIDENCE.

THE police, of course: to come in very calm and ironical of aspect. A lost child? One of them said it was a "rummy go." The other thought a child or two more or less didn't matter.

"I could get 'em a round dozen for ten bob apiece—healthy ones, eh, Bill?"

The other nodded shortly, for he was a

man of few words; but he was, on the whole, more impressed than his fellow, inasmuch as, being a man of the world, he considered that a real baronet's son was a being, even though a small one, of some importance, and it was a "case on" likely to mean prominence of name and future promotion. In fact, this was our old friend P.C. Wilkins, of the assault case, with whom fate dealt so hardly as regards advance.

The accumulative brain power of two intelligent officers, then, was brought to bear upon the case; and Sir Richard impatiently leaving the business to them, while cursing mentally the slow, matter-of-fact way in which they went to work, they examined the servants one by one, to find that the only being who knew anything about the matter was Fanny; while her knowledge was next to nothing.

However, every domestic was closely questioned and cross-questioned, each in turn taking the examination as a matter of course—in fact, revelling in it, and volunteering statement after statement that never entered into the constables' note books.

But they say there is no rule without an exception, and the exception here was the cook, who was in dudgeon at the first question put to her by that active and intelligent officer, P.C. Wilkins. In fact, P.C. Wilkins had asked her what she considered an impertinent question, one that was "nothing to him nor nobody else."

It was in this wise.

"Now, ma'am," said P.C. Wilkins, who, although reserved in conversation, was a busy talker in business—"now, ma'am, just have the kindness to tell me where you were at the time?"

It will be seen that P.C. Wilkins adopted the cross-examination style of a celebrated counsel, famous for the way in which he twisted witnesses round his thumb.

"I beg your parding," said cook, condescendingly.

"I said, ma'am," said P.C. Wilkins, "where were you at the time?"

And relieving himself of this, he drew back his head like an inquisitive magpie, and looked sidewise at the haughty dame.

"Which I presoom that aint any business of yours," said cook.

"My good woman," said P.C. Wilkins, "have the goodness to answer my question. I said—"

"And pray who do you call my good

woman?" said cook, in the softest and most suave of tones—those dulcet notes that in low life generally presage a violent vituperative storm.

P.C. Wilkins was a wise man; he saw his danger, and put up a metaphorical umbrella to ward off the shower. He knew this style of woman; and also that if she once got an innings after her mode, he might bowl for hours without ever getting a chance at her stumps. Therefore, in the sweetly expressive wording of our Transatlantic brethren, he "caved in," and tried another way to the gold mine of the culinary understanding.

"It was merely a way we have, ma'am," he said, respectfully. "No offence meant, I assure you, ma'am; pray, don't think me rude. Such an unpleasant duty to perform; but you see—"

"I don't see nothing of the sort," said cook, huffily.

"No, my dear madam," said P.C. Wilkins, "but a lady of your intelligence must see in a moment."

Cook snorted, and refused to accept the oil of reconciliation, determinedly snubbing her examiner at nearly every question, and going off into irrelevant offence, in a way that was aggravating even to the patience of an experienced policeman.

"Now, just look here a moment, ma'am," said P.C. Wilkins, wiping now a dewy moisture from his brow.

"I tell you, my good man, I'm as innocent as a unborn child," said cook; and she threw back her head, and looked from one to the other triumphantly.

"Nobody says you are not," exclaimed P.C. Wilkins, who might long before this have given up—seeing with half an eye that there was nothing to be obtained from a dame who, like the celebrated Frau Vandersloosh of "Snarleyow," was "too fat not to be honest."

"It don't matter to me what anybody thinks, or what anybody don't think," said cook, defiantly. "I mind my business, and it's a pity as other people don't mind theirs, instead of coming and treating respectable servants of good character as if they were pickpockets. Sir Richard ought to be ashamed of himself."

"Never mind Sir Richard," said P.C. Wilkins, getting now as obstinate as the irate dame. "Just you answer my questions, or you may get yourself into trouble; so now, then!"

"There's the keys of my boxes, pleece-man, and you may search them through and through; and as to dripping, that's my perquisite, and no business of anybody's; so now then!"

P.C. Wilkins gave up in despair after this, for he could not imagine that the child had locked himself into one of the cook's boxes; and the conclusion of his examination was an aggregate of *nil*.

Here was the state of affairs.

Nobody had seen any one come.

Nobody had seen any one go.

Jane confessed to having left the child in the dining-room while she went upstairs to brush a merino dress that was getting full of the moth.

Fanny only knew she had met Jane, who said that she was going away for a few minutes, and that she had asked her to look at Master Clive.

The other servants could tell nothing; and to all appearance the matter was a mystery not likely to be solved.

NEW NEWS OF THE OLD.—II.

WILKES was not the only powerful writer of his day. A skilled and clear reasoner, a journalist polished in his style, invincible in his sarcasm, terrible in pointed attack, had also come to the front. The letters of "Junius" made the *Morning Advertiser* the famous paper of the time, and put its publisher in the rather unenviable position of a public trial, from which, however, he had the good fortune to come off almost unscathed. And when we consider what these two men were, we must readily admit that the most natural result which could follow their work was a very decided improvement in the condition of the public press. Leading articles began to put forward a higher tone than heretofore; reporting paragraphs to show more clearness of account and care in their preparation; news to be classified under its various subjects; and the collection of that news to be more diligently carried on. So that we find a *Cambridge Chronicle* for 1762, in a fairly respectable state, containing sixteen columns, each about the size of a column in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and giving university intelligence, home and foreign news, a letter now and then, poetry (of whose quality perhaps the less said the better, though in quantity it is plentiful enough), and a leader in each number, which was

probably instituted for the purpose of combating the assertions of its rival the *Journal*, to which, however, it was joined a few years later.

But however much the general and special news may have improved, we find advertisements still worded very curiously, as if not having been revised by editorial hand before their insertion.

Of course, as we all know, the great skill of an advertiser is chiefly seen in the style which he makes use of. He is to mention the "universal esteem, or general reputation" of things that were never heard of; but we do not find this perfection even approached unto yet.

It was a very frequent custom, when anything had been or was supposed to be stolen, to advertise for it, offering a reward "and no questions asked." This mode of proceeding, obviously detrimental to public morals, was forbidden by an Act of George II., which inflicted a penalty of £50 on the persons advertising, and the same on the printer. Also by an Act of George III., if any person advertised a public meeting for debate on Sunday, "to which persons are to be admitted by money, or tickets sold," the printer was to forfeit £50 for each offence.

Twenty years later the stamp and advertisement duties—hitherto not light—were increased; and all was done to keep newspapers from the poor, and to restrain the freedom of the press. We find a journal of the size of the *Graphic*, and containing four pages, sold for sixpence. Passing on twelve years, we see the *Times*, then a paper of twenty-seven years' standing, giving twenty columns of news, and sold for sixpence-halfpenny. It has many advertisements, and they are all mixed up with the news. There are tidings from Germany and Spain nearly a month old, and from Portugal a fortnight; but the articles are now and then infinitely more interesting than some of those of the present day. By this time, also, we find births, marriages, and deaths reported quite regularly.

The *Morning Chronicle*, too, of this date contains as much, if not more, news than the *Times*. It gives no poetry, and is much better printed. One curious paragraph in it is worth quoting. It appeared in the number for Feb. 10, 1812, and, referring to lotteries, runs thus:—" 'Bring out more barouches and four,' was often the ostentatious

order of a late nobleman, whose fortune is supposed to have been gained in India, when the fact is, that he made £40,000 by purchasing tickets and shares at Carter's Lucky Office, No. 8, Charing Cross, where we advise the whole Whip Club to draw up before Thursday, the 18th instant."

That most peculiarly interesting portion of the newspapers of our own time, commonly called the "Agony Column," is a comparatively recent invention, and is still quite a mild matter in the journals of 1833. To remark upon its progress were superfluous here, when it is truly a column in the *Times* every morning, and is not small in other daily papers. It must suffice to say, en passant, that the most agonizing of all the notices should be taken by the outside world with a considerable grain of salt.

In the last thirty years the press has been rapidly improving, its freedom having been increased and its external aids greatly extended. The use of steam and electricity has served few things to so great an extent as it has the press; and improvements do not appear inclined to fail us yet. We can now have a speech delivered in America reported at full length in the following morning's papers; and, with the difference of clock time, a message can get to India before it was sent from England. So far as reporting goes, the daily journals are at their best, and the high-class illustrated ones all that can be desired.

And now, having traced the history of our newspapers, let us pause for a moment to consider the influence which has been and is being wrought by them on the affairs of the land. We see in every journal that is published a certain number of leading articles, expressing the opinions of a staff of writers on each matter of public interest. These articles are, as a rule, in the principal papers, well and carefully written; and no fault can be found with the opinions which they express. But their fault lies in this: that their writers treat the subjects as if the sentiments set forward were infallible, as if their own word was to be law, as if the slightest contradiction should call forth an angry reply. Now, we do not for a moment deny that such writers as those to whom we allude are perfectly well qualified to treat, in an ephemeral manner, any subject which may be brought under their notice—that is to say, they can draw public attention to it in such a way as may be useful. But what we object

to is this: that whilst it is the duty of the journalists of our day to attract notice and give advice, they arrogate to themselves the right to lay down the law in every matter; whereas it is altogether impossible that a single man should be perfect in many things, or that a body of men should be perfect in all things. An ordinary journalist cannot be supposed to be so well acquainted with matters of science as a man who has made these the study of his life; and therefore it is absurd that our newspaper writers should give their opinions, expecting these opinions to remain uncontradicted. Yet such is the spirit of our newspaper press; and so long as this spirit exists, our journals cannot fail to have much room for improvement, for with it a due ventilation of valuable opinions with regard to important matters is impossible. The real right of giving forth weighty ideas lies with a more stable class of our literature, namely, our magazines; and hence we assert that the true duty of our newspapers is—besides affording news—to call attention to, and give advice in a more gentle way upon, the various and varied incidents of the much-changing generation of our day.

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER XI.

"And though they hope, and now they grieve
As if that parting were the last,
The frequent sigh—the long embrace—
The lip that there would cling for ever."—

Byron.

MRS. MANNING, who had hardly recovered from a very severe illness when she had her house full for the first of September, was again laid up by her late exertions, and for some time was kept a close prisoner to the house. Feeling a little better towards the end of the month, she decided on spending a few days at Tarnwater; thinking the sea air might brace her up for the coming winter, which, even thus early in the autumn, was prematurely advancing with rapid strides.

Knowing her niece's great dislike to small watering-places, and fancying a short respite from her constant attendance on her would be wise, she proposed that Agnes should pay a long-promised visit to some friends in Scotland; and, unaware of the loadstone at the Red House, was very much astonished at her declining the visit, and begging to

stay at home instead; and of course it was finally settled that she did remain, solus, at the Hall.

Agnes had seen very little of Captain Nolan lately, for in public they kept up a strict incognito; and it was only when picking up her arrows at archery, or miraculously finding their balls under the same tree in croquet, that they were able to exchange a few hurried words, and plan an appointment. These private meetings had been singularly unfortunate—either Mr. Græme came in, or her aunt required her; but so it happened that as yet something had always intervened to prevent Agnes from fulfilling her part of the engagement. This greatly annoyed Captain Nolan, who could not understand why she, with an aunt, was not as free of action as he, without one. Have you an aunt? Yes. Then you understand.

Mrs. Manning on quitting Heathfield left Agnes a commission, in the shape of personally conveying to a special favourite old woman in the village some words of comfort, with a supply of the much-beloved dripping. On returning from the railway station, Agnes, wishing to have the afternoon free, set out at once on her mission of charity. Pondering how she could let him know that she was all alone, she walked quickly down the river-side. On reaching the archway of the bridge she heard a horse's foot above, and with accustomed curiosity looked up, and encountered her lover's eyes looking down; for he, on seeing her below, had reined up close to the low parapet.

"How is Mrs. Manning?" he called out.

"Better—gone away for a few days, for change of air."

"Where are you off to?"

"Only into the village."

"Come back by the plantation," said he, in a low voice, leaning over the bridge.

"Take care, you will fall over!"

"All right, if you will catch me."

I am afraid to say how many times the words of comfort, the dripping, and especially the old woman, as being the primary cause, were all mentally doomed to a "searching expedition" for the lost wheels of the chariots of Pharaoh, during the quarter of an hour which passed before Agnes crossed the bridge and entered the plantation. Hurrying on, she soon reached the spot with the obnoxious notice, the place where first they had met; and there paused, as she looked around.

Was it possible that only three short months had elapsed since their first meeting? It could not be; she had lived years since that day; she must have calculated falsely. But, no! whether she added up the days or weeks, she could not make it more. How changed the place appeared. Then, it was a bright summer's day, the trees glad in their leafy splendour, the foreground ablaze with brightest flowers, the path with many a wide-mouthed gape gasping for a little rain; while the sun, glancing through the leaves from bough to bough, finally fell on the brand new caution board, shedding over its white letters a silvery glory. Now, it was a cold, comfortless autumnal day, the trees sighing as a sudden gust of wind stripped them of their faded foliage, the foreground a mass of decaying leaves, the path in an amphibious state; while the sun determinedly shut himself up behind a leaden sky, leaving the poor notice looking like a gridiron hung up to dry, its once white letters having wept their little lives away.

"And am I not altered too?" sighed Agnes on gazing round. "I feel very much older; wonder if I look so—will ask Phil. Ah! if he could only settle with those horrid duns, so that I could tell Aunt Manning that we are engaged, how happy I should be; for this secrecy, and never being able to meet him when he wants, makes me—no! not unhappy, I cannot be that while I have his love; but it is uncomfortable to be always hearing Mr. Græme's praises, and disparaging remarks about Phil, who is worth ten—twenty—"

She went into a reverie over what he was worth, until roused by the priceless one himself, who, tired of waiting at the end of the path, had walked down to see what had become of her.

Taking her hands in his, he said—

"What are these deep thoughts, which make my very existence quite forgotten?"

She coloured guiltily, and turned her head away. But he was not to be balked thus; for framing her face in his hands, he made her look up, while he said—

"Tell me, darling; I have thought lately you did not seem so anxious to meet me?"

"Oh, Phil!" said she, in a reproachful tone. Then added, "I was thinking of the first time I ever saw you, and how strange it is, when I hated you so then, that in less than three short months I should love you better than any one in the world."

He was satisfied now, and said—

"You know, as Mrs. Malaprop says, 'it is safest to begin with a little aversion.' But, Agnes, I have thought of a first-rate plan for this afternoon. Your aunt is away, and my Multum-in-parvo and his wife, having gone to celebrate the wedding of their cousin's brother's aunt, the gods are well out of the road; so we poor mortals can have an innings; and I propose that you come home with me and try my new piano."

"That will be delightful," exclaimed Agnes, her eyes dancing with pleasure.

"Oh, shocking! A highly improper proceeding! No well-conducted young lady would ever have done such a thing," burst from the lips of Madame Modernpropriety.

"My good woman, I am aware the correct young lady, who is taught to find an improper motive in every action, would have blushed, hung her head, simpered, and said 'it would not be proper;' but Agnes had never had a code of proprieties drawn up for her. All her actions were the spontaneous outpourings of a heart ruled by right and wrong, instead of being entirely controlled by Mrs. Grundy; so, madame, you must excuse her speaking the truth."

As they entered the orchard which surrounded the Red House, they came near to a low, straggling pile of buildings, stretching down to the moat.

"What are those queer dark arches there, looking just like the crypt of a cathedral?"

"They are my Augæan stables, and I grieve to say my man is not a modern Hercules. We won't go there."

And they passed on to the house, the ruinous side of which now stood gloomily before them.

"It is a curious-looking old place: I have often longed to see inside it. Will you take me all over the house?"

"With the greatest pleasure in the world, only I am afraid there is nothing worth seeing," said he, as they stood before the closed hall door. Begging Agnes to wait there a few moments, he vaulted through the open library window, and was soon heard on the other side of the oak, rattling chains and murmuring strong language. This opening of the door proved a more difficult undertaking than he at first anticipated; for when every bolt was withdrawn, and the key turned and re-turned, still it refused to part company with the frame it had been so long attached to. When he hammered and pulled

at the top, it stuck at the bottom, and when he tugged at the lowest bolt it adhered to the lintel; till at length, with a mighty wrench and a jerk, it flew violently open.

"It is my belief that door has never been opened for a century. I thought at one time I should have been obliged to take it off its hinges to let you in," gasped out he, as he stood on the threshold panting from his late exertions.

"I could have come in through the window too," said she.

They first entered the old banquetting hall, a long panelled apartment hung on three sides with portraits of the house of Nolan, by very ancient masters, the fourth being taken up by a heavily carved oak chimney-piece, after the manner of Michael Angelo, as the guide books have it. But the great beauty of the hall consisted in its embossed oaken roof, from which drooped, idly flapping against the empty casements, torn banners of departed heroes.

"How beautiful!" murmured Agnes, in an awe-struck voice.

"I can only see shame and ruin," said he, gnawing the ends of his long moustache.

"It is not very much decayed: it could easily be restored."

"Yes, if it was not for the confounded money, which is always in the way," said he, thinking bitterly of the late Mr. Manning's will.

Then they began to climb the old oak staircase, whose immense carved knobs of fruit and flowers at once gained the admiration of Agnes, who was fain to stop at every angle to examine the beauty of each one in succession. On reaching the top of the stairs, they came at once on to a long wainscoted corridor, running the whole length of the house, with rooms opening on to it on either side.

"What a capital ball-room," said she.

"I am afraid it would be rather difficult to keep your equilibrium," said he, pointing to the waves in the floor. "All these rooms are very much alike, but I think this is the show one;" and opening the door of a small room of no particular shape, gave to view an old bed, tattered and torn enough to have served Queen Elizabeth for a night; and a representation on panel, over the fireplace, of the Madonna and Child, the former decidedly disclaiming all connection with the temperance league, and the latter frantically endeavouring to tumble backwards

out of his mother's arms. "There is nothing to see here; but if you do not mind mounting still higher, I will show you the chapel in the roof, which is really a curious place."

Amidst clouds of dust, and a chorus of screeching from jackdaws and other feathered tribes, who for years had had sole possession of these upper regions, and now viewed with indignation this unwarrantable invasion on their ancestral rights; one moment in total darkness, the next in a flood of light; round sharp corners, under low beams, and through piles of rubbish, Captain Nolan and Agnes Lane groped their way to a little, long pointed chamber in one of the gables. From a rusty chain in the ceiling, an old iron lamp still hung before a pile of carved stones, once the high altar. Two niches for holy water, and a faded fresco of Moses and Aaron, arranged in Roman togas, with red-hot poker in their hands, was all that remained to mark the spot, where many a fervent prayer, wrung from pain and anguish, had ascended on High.

Agnes looked round almost disappointed.

"You do not think there is much to see, after all? But look here," said he, taking her hand and leading her to the large open fireplace, which, stooping down, he entered, and opening a door in the side of the chimney, showed her a passage running round the chapel in the thickness of the walls. "Come and see where they used to hide during persecution," said he, stepping into the passage, closely followed by Agnes. He walked on until they came to the back of the altar, where the passage, widening out, made room for a stone pallet, with a hatch above, through which the fugitive used to have his food passed by the priest behind the high altar.

"They must have been very short men in those days, with bones of cast iron," said Captain Nolan, giving his head a severe knock against the wall, while vainly trying to fit himself into the stone pallet. "Do you know, when hard up, the priests would come behind here, and, under the cloak of the supernatural, fleece their devoted followers. They were always clever hands at raising the wind, without having recourse to the felonious tribe of Judah. Ah, as the old ladies say, 'For those good old days again,' Agnes! Would not we lay on the hokey-pokey hot and strong, and build up the old place again, with our ill-gotten gains."

"Though I am fond of weird places, yet I am glad to get back here, for so many deserted rooms were beginning to make me feel quite melancholy," said Agnes, as Captain Nolan put her into his own special arm-chair in the library.

Said he, drawing his chair close to the one she was in—

"I was afraid you would not like the place—I know it must seem so dull and gloomy after Heathfield."

"No, it does not—I should like to sit for hours in the old hall. Besides—"

"Besides what?"

"I have not you at Heathfield."

Let every man think of his own experience. If of a pleasant nature, he will be able rightly to fill up this vacuum.

* * * * *

Notwithstanding it is so delightful to be lost in oblivion, yet this world has so eloquent an advocate in the shape of hunger, that even lovers are obliged to acknowledge its way.

"Agnes, I don't know how you feel, but I am uncommonly hungry."

"Well, now you mention it, I think I am."

"Pon my honour, I do not know if there is anything in the house, for I told Mrs. Timbrel not to bother, as I would dine with the 200th at Muggerford; but if you do not mind foraging, I have no doubt we shall find something."

"Oh, a cup of tea or anything will do for me."

Said he, stroking his moustache and wondering why ladies always asked for that beverage—

"Tea!—I am afraid I have not got any. You see, I am not much of a tea drinker, but there must be coffee somewhere; only I believe making it is a dreadful process. I have plenty of brandy and soda, and you can have the choice of any of these liqueurs," said he, opening a cupboard and showing her a collection of bottles.

Agnes read Curaçoa, Maraschino, Angostura Bitters, and shook her head.

"I could never make up my mind which to begin with, and I know I should never get beyond the first trial."

"Then let us see what the gods, as represented by Mrs. Timbrel, and the cats have left us," said he, as they proceeded to the unexplored back regions.

On entering the kitchen, the first object that met Agnes's eyes was a high balcony running across the lower end of it. Said she, with marked surprise—

"I never saw a kitchen before with a band balcony in it."

"You don't mean to say you think that that gallery was built for a band!" jerked out Captain Nolan, between fits of laughter.

"Why should not I? They always have a thing like that at the end of every ball-room I have ever been in."

"This one was used for a wiser and sadder purpose. It is where our great-grandmothers would sit, and abuse the cook while superintending the preparation of the dinner. So, you see, you will be able to scold the servants at a safe distance; for I could not allow those pretty eyes to be scratched out."

Agnes, by way of hiding her blushes, buried her face in a cupboard.

"I remember," continued he, "when a boy, it used to be my great amusement on wet days to creep quietly into the balcony, fishing rod in hand, and catch the maid-servants' caps off their heads as they passed below. Luckily, they did not wear chignons in those days, or I might have revealed some painful truths."

"I wish you could catch something just now a little more substantial," said the voice from the cupboard.

"So do I; but I cannot find out where Mrs. Timbrel hides everything. I shall certainly have the kitchen catalogued in future, with a view to like emergencies; but, Agnes, you have been a long time in there, what have you found?"

"Nothing but these," she said, holding up some lemons.

"Eureka! the very thing I wanted."

"But we cannot eat raw lemons."

"No; but I see my way to some milk punch, which I am sure you would like; and I am quite au fait at mixing that."

"Yes, do, and I will help to make it too. I do not know much about cooking, having never made anything in my life, except toffee; but I should like to learn, and milk punch does not sound very difficult to begin with."

"Barring the toffee on your side, and the punch on mine, I fancy our culinary efforts would be very much on a par. I did once cook a wild duck in India; but though very hard up for something to eat, the fellow with me utterly refused to touch it. Of course, I

was obliged to eat some to vindicate my own cooking."

"Was it so very nasty?"

"No, not exactly nasty, though it did taste of anything but duck. It was the look of the thing that went so against it, for it came out more like a flattened-out frog than anything else. I tried to persuade my friend that a duck must be a duck, whether sitting down or crushed out; but nothing that I could say made the slightest impression on his hard heart."

All the concomitants having been got together in the library, Captain Nolan proceeded carefully to mix the milk, rum, lemons, and sugar; then, adding in a dash of curaçoa, he declared it ready, and handed Agnes a glass, which she took gingerly, turning it round, looking below and above, as if wishing to advance cautiously to the attack, like a child who has once had senna surreptitiously insinuated into his tea.

"Do try some—it really is excellent, though lemons are a poor substitute for limes. I always used them in India. Don't you like it?"

"Is it not rather strong?"

"Not in the least. I purposely made it weak. Why, if it was strong, half a tumbler would knock a man down, whereas you might drink a couple of tumblers of this. But you will have some dinner or luncheon? I do not know what to call this impromptu affair," said he, as they sat down opposite each other.

From the miscellaneous collection of viands on the table, it might well have puzzled the most learned as to its correct appellation. It was a repast that seemed to combine a little of every meal. Pickled salmon, marmalade, game pie, cheese, cream, biscuits, and a large assortment of pickles and sauces, each boasting a flaming placard, declaring it to be the one true brand, gently insinuating that all others were base impostures, and particularly requesting the public to take notice that none were genuine but those bearing the cap and bells, the proprietor's own trade mark.

In spite of its incongruity, it was a very delicious meal to those two. Agnes sat with her still unfinished glass of punch, trying to eat chutney, and declaring Captain White (though his pickles made her feel as if she had swallowed a sinapism) to be an honour to his country. Luckily a fit of coughing released her from further pickle

experiments, and she was delighted when asked to experimentalize on the new grand instead.

At first all his music was tried over, and he was made to perform; but when the evening began to close in, Agnes remained in sole possession of the piano, and then commenced really to play. Wandering in and out the keys, from one symphony to another, in a never-dying strain; gazing dreamily before her, only conscious of his presence when his long, fair moustache swept across her forehead, as he stood leaning over the back of her chair, wholly oblivious of India, duns, and debt, she played on, and he stood listening, until the moon lit up a cloudless sky studded with the "poetry of heaven." Then a clock struck, and the spell was broken. (*Quite en règle, is it not?*)

"How dark it is! I must go," exclaimed Agnes, jumping up from the piano and going to the window.

"It is quite early yet—it is only ten o'clock," said he, holding up his watch to catch a ray of moonlight.

"But I must go; and the moon has just come out to light me home."

"Well, if you think you ought to go, I suppose you must. But it seems an infernal shame to break up such a pleasant evening," sighed he, walking to the window, where Agnes was already star-gazing. In an interrogative tone, "What is it?"

"Phil, the moon must be shining straight into the old banquetting hall."

"It looks like it. We had better go and see."

They went.

Through the broken casements the moon streamed in, lighting up the old hall in long streaks of yellow light, which, as they fell on the walls, lent a sinister expression to the face of many a noble knight and stately dame; here giving to view the right side of a portrait, while leaving the other half in total darkness. The torn banners from above flapped noiselessly to and fro, casting ghostly shadows on the moon-beamed floor, while the owls hooted mournfully outside.

Said Agnes, clinging to his arm and pointing to a sardoniac-looking old lady in an oval frame, "Who is that? She looks as if she were grinning and laughing at us, Phil!"

"I have no doubt she would if she could. Nothing was too bad for her: she first ruined the estate."

"Let us go; if I stay here much longer I

shall begin to think I see all your ancestors walking down out of their frames; and from what you say, many of them would not be very desirable acquaintances."

"I do not know why it is, but the greater blackguards your ancestors have been the more you seem to prize them. It is a well-known fact that the portraits of the black Sir Hubert and the bloody Sir Guy are always considered the most valuable."

"You shall not have the trouble of opening the hall door again. I am superstitious enough not to like having the door shut on me," said Agnes, as they re-entered the library. Then there was a great hunt for hats and gloves, which resulted in his felt being discovered under a pile of music, and one of her gloves in the sugar, while its fellow was nowhere to be found. Little did she dream that it was close to her hand, having been furtively inserted between the leaves of a military treatise "On the Art of Fortification." In their search they disturbed another late reveller, in the shape of the cat, who, having fared sumptuously, had laid himself down to slumber on the table, with intent on waking of going in for a second edition.

"Phil, it seems higher from the ground than I thought it was; but I can jump it," said Agnes, leaning out of the window.

"And expect me to stand by and see you break your neck—very likely," said Phil, carefully lifting her down, and drawing her hand through his arm. "You had better let me guide you; for it is rather dark, and the path by no means even."

On arriving at the foot-bridge they stopped, and leaning over the hand-rail, looked down into the angry waters below, which, owing to the late rains, were roaring and fuming louder than usual.

"Phil," said she, touching his coat sleeve, "I can say good-bye now, for I shall be all right when once in the park."

"You do not suppose I am going to let you walk all that way by yourself? Besides, there is lots of time. Look at the moon, how she is struggling to get through the trees. Let us go down by the river; it is not much farther, and we may get a fine reflection."

This he said, not that he cared one straw for scenery, but he knew she did, and anything to lengthen out the evening.

So they wandered on to Death's Hollow, and there descended to the river's side.

Even Captain Nolan was struck with the scene. The moon, which had just burst forth from the trammels of a dark cloud, was reflected at their feet, silvering a thousand little waves before they passed into shade; the dark rocks peered out majestically from the gloom on the right, while the pine plantation flung sinister shadows on the moonlit valley. Save the distant roaring of the waters, all was still: a stillness as of death itself, a holy silence which to Agnes it seemed profanation to break; but even as she stood drinking in its beauty she shuddered.

It was one of those cold blasts that herald to the heart forebodings of ill: like the winds, we know not from whence they come or whither they go; but they track us through life, dogging our footsteps, ever ready to lay their icy fingers on our hearts at the appointed time. They care not if in the maddening waltz, or in the triumph of the odd trick, or in the solemn antiphon, or while raising the ruddy wine to the lips, they perform their mission and pass on. You start, you look around in expectation of some stupendous event; but no, the waltz whirls on, the cards are freshly dealt, the choirs sing on, the glasses are replenished. You say, "What a fool I am;" you laugh, and remember it no more until the one day of dull agony arrives, then a small voice mockingly whispers, "You had your warning."

"You are cold, my darling. Come farther back—it is damp by the river side," said he, taking her under the old oak tree.

"Phil, it seems as if we were never to say good-bye to-night; but if I wish to get into the house, I must go."

"Ah, Agnes! if it could only be never good-bye again," said he, passionately kissing her moonlit face. At last releasing her, he said, "You promise to meet me here to-morrow?"

"I promise," said she, fervently.

"And Agnes, you will not let Mrs. Manning humbug you into listening to any nonsense from Græme?"

"Of course not."

"But Agnes, he has so many opportunities of seeing you, and I so few, that I cannot help feeling anxious."

"What can I say to convince you that he means nothing?"

Eagerly, "Say you hate him."

"No, I do not. If anything was to happen to him, I should be sorry; but if I lost

you, I take this old oak to witness, I should die."

Then they reascended the Hollow; and standing where their different paths diverged, at length bade a final adieu.

"Only one kiss more, and it shall be the last."

Captain Nolan truly was among the prophets, but at the time he knew it not.

SWEET SENSIBILITY.

TO be a tradesman by national implication is as sweet incense to an English nostril. Do we not glory in being a nation of shopkeepers? To be a tradesman in certain civic senses, involving the freedom of a periodical walhalla of turtle and champagne, is admitted to be a noble ambition. Nay, we cheerfully pay a heavy premium to become Fishmongers, Fellmongers, Loriners, and the like. But to be a tradesman in the popular sense of a shopkeeper, is an opprobrium to which no philosophy can reconcile us.

In fact, if I might give a short hint to curates, parasites, parliamentary candidates, and, in general, all who have to solicit invitations, suffrages, or subscriptions, it would be to forget that there is such a word as shop. Believe me, those who cannot forget the "thing" will handsomely pay your oblivion of the "name." Thus, suppose I am accepting an invitation to dine with my friend Brown, the prosperous chemist. If I say, "Very happy, will call for you at the shop," Brown remembers that he is a tradesman, and I wash down my saddle of mutton with a sound dinner hock at about 36s., and crack my walnuts over a very blended or electric port. But if I say, "I'll call for you at No. 58," Brown remembers that he is a host, and gets up a bottle of Cabinet Steinberg, at which he winks confidentially, and a bottle of port which, like virtue, is its own reward.

"What despicable servility!" sneers the cynic, who quaffs the generous Cape in Belgravian halls.

Stuff, Mr. Cynic! After all, if a man does not like his place of business called a shop, am I to drink his bad stuff because I cannot yield a point? Yea, by St. Anne! and so long as he gives me the "green seal," I will endow him with an emporium, or a dépôt, or a warehouse, or a bazaar, or any other euphemistic tenement and here-

ditament he fancies. Still, it puzzles me why he objects to call it a shop.

Why not shop, indeed? People call a spade a spade, though the proverb implies—that no one would ever guess—that to do so was once the mark of a coarse and prosaic mind. But to call a shop a shop is a wanton infraction of the fundamental principle of modern society.

The old-fashioned shop is like that worthy elder Shakspeare, sadly in want of modernization. Keeping a shop, in fact, does not satisfy modern notions of "good form," in the minds either of society or the tradesmen themselves.

But why? I suppose one great reason why the "nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood" look down on shopkeepers is that they envy them the certainty and magnitude of their profits.

And perhaps, on reflection, it is rather annoying to the fractional partner in some infinitesimally wholesale concern to think that while he adorns his walls with the lustrous oleograph, his upholsterer can boast his Stansfields, his Linnells, or his Marks.

We too, the supers and walking gentlemen of law or literature, when our tailor be-spatters us with his barouche and pair, may be excused for feeling some slight annoyance to think that out of our poverty we contribute our quota to this magnificent equipage. So we console ourselves by voting Snip low, and we blackball him at our club, and we exclude him from our assembly rooms, and we inflict on him a hundred other little social snubs, not because he is ill-mannered or ill-educated—which he may or may not be—but because he keeps a shop. Perhaps, too, we owe him a long bill; and it is astonishing how meanly we think of those to whom we owe money. Still, all this does not explain why shopkeepers despise themselves. What malaria stifles their self-respect? Simply the miasma of gentility.

There is, no doubt, a noble side to this universal hankering after gentility, so far as it means a preference for culture and refinement over material comfort. But, so far as it seeks the mere husks and shells of refinement—electro-plate and a cheap piano—it is tragically ridiculous. The manager of one of our great railways told me the other day that the porters at one of their termini receive higher wages than the clerks, a porter getting 28s. a week, exclusive of "tips," a

clerk 25s. And yet strapping young fellows are constantly insisting on being promoted from the comfortable obscurity of velvetten to the shivering gentility of mixed cloth. Surely a ghastly simulacrum of gentility! Not that I am going to point a very severe moral at the folly of a poor starveling, when my betters afford so fair a target. But it is always easier to get your premises granted at the expense of the object.

"Oh!" says the genteel tradesman, "your clerk is simply a stuck-up snob. Our ambition is a very different thing."

A rank fallacy, sir. Ambition implies discontent with, not shame of, your present position. As to the railway clerk being a snob, any one above his business is a snob. But I am becoming personal.

The odd thing about money taken over the counter is, that it gives no more pleasure in the spending than the making. It is not wholly purified even by passing through a college career. When I was at Oxford, I used to be amused at the sensitiveness shown by some fellows who were spending the accumulations of the paternal till in a fine open-handed manner. Not that I speak from the Vere de Vere point of view. I was the son of an Anfield shopkeeper myself; but, whether because I was naturally deficient in the finer feelings, or because I knew the fact was one of common notoriety, I could bear the most cutting allusions to "those cursed shopkeepers" with rhinoceros-like impassiveness. Indeed, I dare say I used to curse the rapacity of Oxford tradesmen as heartily as if my allowance had been out of the abundance of ancestral acres and not of the paternal cash-box.

What would have been the use of shirking the fact, when I used to breakfast with fellows from my own town, who had their knives marked "J. Stubbs, Anfield"? Apropos of which knives, I remember, I laughed as loudly as any one when little Bob Grosvenor asked me, by way of a most exquisite joke, "I say, Stubbs, old man, are you in the cutlery line?" Poor Bob was utterly aghast when I replied, "Not exactly; but my governor is." Nor can I ever forget the perplexity of my tutor when he took me to be matriculated. "What is your father, Stubbs?" he said. "A cutler, sir," I answered. Poor Wells was quite abashed; and, after humming and ha-ing a minute or two—perhaps he was trying to recollect the Latin for cutler—he said, "H'm, well, we'll

say esquire." And down went the governor as armiger.

Now, young Kidder, of St. Valentine's, the son of an eminent upholsterer in Anfield, was morbidly sensitive on the point. When he was leaving his rooms, the incomer asked him what he thought the valuation might be. "Hang it," roared Kidder, "do you think I'm an upholsterer?" And when his father sent him up a gorgeous bookcase, with "From H. Kidder & Co., Anfield," on the packing-case, I thought the youth would have had a fit. The least allusion to furniture set him off. To compliment him on the elegance of his rooms was vivisection to him. But the crowning agony happened once when the upholsterer came up to spend a day or two with his son.

The old boy stood a lot of us a noble spread at the Mitre, at which, I dare say, we all drank as much as we could carry. After dinner we lit up, and went for a stroll in Worcester-gardens, on the ornamental water of which a pair of handsome swans were floating.

The sight of these graceful birds seemed to tickle old Kidder immensely. He stood, as it were, spell-bound, and gazed with humorous admiration, till we all gathered round to see what he was chuckling at. At last he found utterance, and this was the horrible speech he made.

"Tom, my boy," he said, nudging me in the ribs, "do you see that stuff?" pointing to the soft down on the birds' necks. "We sell that for a guinea a pound."

After this young Kidder renounced gentility in despair, gave over wearing a ring with an enormous crest and some fine Latin motto on it, and became a very much more popular fellow than before.

Well, I laughed at Kidder, and took credit to myself for not being ashamed of my father being a cutler. But I am not sure that I was not for drawing the line at cutler. Could I have displayed the same equanimity if my father had been a perfumer, or kept a restaurant, or been a haberdasher? I could stand the knives and their legend; but how about bottles of Circassian Regenerator, or Amaranthine Pomatum, with a gay yellow label, "Prepared by J. Stubbs only"? How should I like to see a friend's toilette tray bedecked with our apocryphal bear going sadly to the slaughter, yet glorying in our name and address in graceful festoons round his neck?

The unsatisfactory nature of a rich tradesman's expenditure is often regarded as merely a special instance of the universal vanity of riches; and I admit that I feel some delicacy in advancing any theory about money, with which personally I have no better acquaintance than with the rarer species of Coleoptera. Still, I can't believe in the vanity of riches. To me money is being—reality. The real difficulty is that the purchasing power of money varies in different hands. For instance, an earl gets more servility for sixpence than I can for a half-crown.

Now, this uncertainty upsets all the calculations of the retired grocer, who wants to buy a position. He must hit the exact mean between a degree of extravagance as a sort of conscience-money for his ill-gotten gains, and a certain degree of frugality as remembering his sordid antecedents. Why, the life of a lady's spaniel is equable and dignified in comparison! In fact, I should say that opulent shopkeepers, as a body, have less enjoyment of their money than any other class. They have the Sicilian ménus and the music of aviaries and pianos; but these no more elaborate sweet relish in their case than in that of the unfortunate gentleman mentioned by the poet.

Take the suburbs of Anfield. You find the shopkeepers settled in bijou suburban villas, with croquet-grounds, billiard-rooms, and conservatories; and even if the charmed circle of "society"—that is, cotton-spinners and wholesale dealers—repudiates them, they are sufficiently numerous to form a set of their own. But, no! Fellowship is not "society." I don't mind a kick from my betters, but I'm not going to shake hands with my equals. The banquet is insipid when shared with a brother shopkeeper. For instance, there is Tweed, the tailor, making his £10,000 a year, who lives out of town in a perfect mansion, and has a cellar in which he speaks of '47 as a deuced new, sweet wine. If Tweed can get a vicar, or a barrister, or even a poor litterateur with an empty, not proud, stomach, to drive out, he will put on wine for dessert that costs him a guinea a bottle; and the more you drink the more he respects you. But as for his neighbour Congo, the great grocer, Tweed would not sit at the same table with him.

"Hang it!" says Tweed, "Congo keeps a shop; and I'm a merchant, you know."

He actually calls himself a merchant because he sends out trousers to India. But only an overseer knows the desperate shifts to which a shopkeeper will resort to get put on the list as a merchant.

Another fixed point with a shopkeeper is to let his business die out with him. It does not matter how profitable or compact the business is, or how large a family a man has, he will not put his sons into the trade. Let me imagine a case; not actual, but probable. Let Mr. Paisley be a draper in a large way of business, but with a large family to match—say four sons and three daughters. This income is for himself handsome; divide it by seven, and it is insignificant. As they say, a plum pudding looks very well until it is cut up. One would naturally suppose that Paisley would put at least two of his sons into the business. It is an old business, perfectly sound, manages itself, and would enable the lad to marry at once. But, no; Paisley's soul revolts at the thought of perpetuating his line in prosperous tradesmen. Show him his progeny in a long vista of needy barristers, doctors, or curates, and—

"His bosom heaves, his stature grows,
And he awaits the issue in repose."

He swears that if he had forty sons, instead of four, they should all be in professions. Perhaps, however, his sons, not inheriting their father's shrewdness, evince the most stubborn inaptitude for a classical education. No matter! To Oxford they must go, and by some mysterious process be trimmed up for the Church or the bar. The eldest son, by paralyzing exertions, and to the lasting confusion of the few faculties he has, is squeezed into a fourth-rate college. There he sticks hopelessly—

"Three ploughs or four
His college bore—
Tuition was in vain.
At length the chief,
To his relief,
Forbade him try again."

Not even then does Paisley relent, and put the poor lad into a competency. He promptly expatriates him to Australia. He can endure him to be a cattle drover at the Antipodes; but that he should make a fortune by flannel petticoats or silk dresses is an intolerable humiliation. Perhaps his other three sons do somehow or other manage to squeeze through Oxford and get a degree. One of them is now a briefless barrister, and

two are curates without hope of preferment. Encouraged by this brilliant result, Paisley is now thinking of going into the church himself.

But if our shopkeepers thus fairly deserve bantering for their foibles, it is, after all, their virtues which point the satire; and if we are tickled at the blemishes which lie on the surface of substantial virtues, we dare not sneer. To such massive virtues as solvency and private morality, I make respectful obeisance; and these are the shining merits of our retail traders.

If I were a merchant, I know no one whom I would trust rather than English shopkeepers. If I were a suitor for a woman's hand, I would seek my father-in-law among the English shopkeepers. For good looks and modest breasts, their daughters are the flower of womankind. But to their jaundiced eyes the fine gold of comfort, leisure, and integrity is as brass, until it is stamped in the mint of gentility. Their ambition is set on the haunch of mutton vapour baths of society. They pant to browse the dubious mayonnaise and sip the corrosive champagne of the fashionable ball. They have virtues, and will not wear them. Respectability is their forte; but gentility is their foible.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER LI.

THE six weeks' inquiry into the death of the priest O'Rafferty had, at length, been brought to a close; and the committee had advertised, as they were bound to do, for my successor; when I received a message, or red line, marked "urgent," desiring my attendance in one of the outlying townlands of the district between Moighrath and Pennyletter.

The ticket was signed by one of the committee-men, a farmer named Henry Green, who never, under any circumstances, troubled me with "lines" unless there was something very particular the matter. In this case, however, in addition to crossing the ticket, to denote extreme urgency, he had written on the reverse side a few lines, imploring me not to lose a minute.

"I wonder what can be the matter?"

queried my wife, with very pardonable curiosity.

"Some of the men have been caught in his new machinery, you may depend, my dear," I replied, as I caught up my travelling case of surgical instruments, in order to be prepared for any emergency.

"I wonder he hasn't filled in the man's name," again remarked my wife.

"I suppose he hadn't time," I replied.

The messenger, a stolid, heavy-clodhopper, who came for me, knew nothing. He had been told to gallop for the bare life, and had done so; his horse was in a foam, and it would be subject-matter for congratulation, I thought, if the animal did not prove to be irretrievably spoiled.

In less than ten minutes after receipt of the message, I was on my way towards the scene of the accident which I supposed had taken place, and to which I had been so urgently summoned.

The distance I had to travel was fully seven miles, and the road execrable in many places; so that I had chosen to ride, rather than drive, as being also the more expeditious method of getting over the ground.

As I drew near to the Quarry Hill, the scene of the late calamitous affray, during which the priest O'Rafferty lost his life, I met with Mr. St. Clair, and stopped to speak to him for a moment—

"Are you going to Ballynahinch, doctor?"

"I am," I replied; "do you know what has happened there?"

For answer, the vicar held up his hand, and shook his head in the most doleful manner imaginable.

"Is it a very serious case?" I asked.

"Very," he replied; "worse than any one could have imagined, I am afraid. I have not seen her myself; but I met Green, who told me."

"Dear me!" I exclaimed, as I put spurs to my horse. "Good-bye, Mr. St. Clair, I must hurry on."

About a quarter of a mile from the house of the farmer who had sent me the message, I fell in with the worthy agriculturist himself, who straightway stopped me; and, with uplifted hands, exclaimed—

"Eh, doctor, but this is awful work!"

"What is?" I asked.

"Go on and see for yourself," was the answer. "She's in my house, worse luck! Go on, doctor, and see for yourself."

"It is a woman, then?"

"Lord save us!" exclaimed the farmer, in tones of extreme irritation, "as if it could be anything else! A woman and a priest, sure they're at the bottom of every trouble and mischief in the world!"

"You may as well tell me at once what the matter is?" I said, my curiosity excited to the uttermost.

"No, I can't tell you," replied the farmer, "you must just go and judge for yourself; maybe it's a mistake, after all."

"Is the woman, or priest, or whoever it is, dead?" I inquired; "and how did it happen?"

"Ah! don't ask me, doctor. How should I know? Sure I haven't seen her myself; so you go and make sure, there's a good gentleman, go."

Thus adjured, I hastened on towards the house, and a few minutes brought me up to the farmyard gate.

Seeing no one about, I was on the point of dismounting to undo the fastening, when Mrs. Green made her appearance at the front door of the house, wringing her hands.

On perceiving me the good lady hurried across the intervening space, and let me in, exclaiming, as she unfastened the gate—

"Oh, doctor, but I'm glad you're come. She hasn't spoke a word since; maybe she will to you."

"Is she much hurt, and how did it happen?" I asked, as I dismounted.

"She's not hurt that I know of," replied the farmer's wife; "unless it be in her head, poor soul."

The worthy dame then led the way into the house, and ushered me into the best parlour.

Farmer Green's house was a large red brick building, erected in instalments, as occasion required, a room or a closet at a time, without any regard to symmetry, or indeed to the convenience of the residence as a whole. Its general shape was quadrangular—three sides overlooking the farmyard, while the fourth abutted on a garden, in which cabbages and roses, lettuces and orange lilies, were indifferently intermixed; while two overgrown laurel bushes more than half blocked up the windows of the parlour—an apartment which was usually kept in a state of semi-darkness, in order to save the bright colours of the carpet and curtains from fading in a too strong light.

As the windows of this state-room were never opened, and the door but seldom, a musty, vault-like odour pervaded its atmosphere, and caused the new-comer to shiver in spite of himself; nor did it wear a more cheerful aspect on the present than on ordinary occasions, but rather the contrary, for the blinds were all drawn down, and the shutters partially closed; so that upon entering, as I did, from the bright autumn sunshine, I could not for some minutes discern any object in the room.

At last I became aware, more from the hurried breathing than from anything I could see, that some person was standing in the farthest corner of the apartment, opposite the door; and at the same instant a strangely familiar voice exclaimed—

"Ah, doctor! it's little I ever thought to see your face again."

"Good heavens!" I cried, in astonishment, "Margery M'Anvil! Why, when did you return, Margery?"

"Sure, I never went away at all," replied the woman; "but there's more than me come back as well, doctor."

"Gracious Providence!" I exclaimed, as a horrible thought occurred to me that the dead had come back to life.

"Aye, aint it dreadful, doctor?" cried Mrs. Green, from behind me, wringing her hands as she spoke—"aint it dreadful to think of?"

"Mrs. Green," I exclaimed, addressing the farmer's wife, "will you oblige me by opening one of the windows?"

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" cried the portly dame, as she proceeded to comply with my request, and admit as much light as the laurels outside permitted to enter the room. "Oh, dear! oh, dear! and it's a blessing poor dear Sir John aint alive to know it; for it surely would have broke his heart, poor dear old man."

Margery M'Anvil was standing, as I have said, in the corner of the apartment farthest from the door; and behind her sat, or rather crouched, another figure, whose scanty white hair, hanging in dishevelled locks, partially concealed a face which, despite the change effected by time, harsh treatment, and mental alienation, I immediately recognized to be that of Mrs. Woodward, whose dead body I had identified, and then followed to its lonely resting-place in Moighrath churchyard!

CHAPTER LII.

A CLOSER survey convinced me but too thoroughly that there was no mistake; it was really Mrs. Woodward I beheld.

And Doctor Middleton's daughter, what of her? Then, as my wife's confidently and often-repeated suspicions of Jesuitical intrigue recurred to my recollection, I turned to Margery, and in a peremptory manner demanded an explanation—

"What does all this mean?"

"Just what you see," replied the woman, perfectly unabashed—"just what you see, Doctor Cochrane, and not a ha'p'oth more."

"Have you known of that poor creature's existence all this while?"

"Maybe I have, and maybe I haven't," replied the woman, sulkily, but with firmness; adding—"but what's that to do with you?"

"Nothing to me," I replied; "but a great deal to others."

I then turned towards the poor thing who was crouching on the floor behind her keeper—for such Margery must, I thought, have been, to judge from the terrified manner in which she watched every motion the woman made, and shivered at every word she spoke.

"Mrs. Woodward," I said, quietly, and stooping towards the poor afflicted creature as I spoke, "do you remember me?"

For an instant the lack-lustre eyes were fixed on my face, and I fancied I was recognized; but the unfortunate maniac, catching at the same time Margery M'Anvil's angry gaze fixed steadily upon her, shuddered and cowered still farther back into her corner, as a dog might do when threatened by one who, experience had taught, could use the whip with pitiless effect.

"Leave the room, Margery," I said, turning to the woman, and speaking in a determined manner.

"I will not, then," she replied, defiantly; "what would I be after laving it for?"

"Because I order you to do so."

"I'll take my orders from your betters, and not from you," she answered, insolently.

"Very well."

I did not choose to wrangle with the surly creature; so I turned to Mrs. Green, and asked her if she could send a messenger to Dumfernaghalee.

"To be sure I can," replied the farmer's

wife—"two or three of them, doctor, for that matter, if you want them."

"Thank you, Mrs. Green—one will suffice. Can you oblige me with a pen and ink, and a sheet of paper?"

"Surely, doctor."

But upon investigation it was found that there were no such things in the house.

"Never mind," I replied, when made acquainted with this dearth of what I considered indispensable requirements, "I have a pencil, and I dare say I can find a scrap of paper somewhere."

I accordingly tore a blank leaf out of my pocket-book, and wrote a few lines in pencil to the police sergeant, requesting him to come to me with as little delay as possible, and to bring one of his men with him, and the covered car from the hotel.

I did not mention what I wanted him for, but gave him to understand that the occasion was urgent.

In two hours after despatching the messenger, the sergeant was with me.

In the interval I remained in the parlour, and placed myself between Margery and her victim, for such I concluded poor Mrs. Woodward to be.

"What are you going to do, doctor?" inquired M'Anvil, in an insolent tone, after we had sat in silence for quite half an hour; but I took no notice of her question.

"I say, what are you going to do?" she presently asked again, though less confidently than at first.

I made no reply, and she continued—

"Will I get into trouble for this? Because," pursued the woman, finding I did not answer her, "it's been no doing of mine, doctor. Him that's dead and gone—rest his soul!—always said he'd hold me blameless."

This was an important admission, of which I took note on a blank leaf at the end of the book I was pretending to read; but I said never a word.

"Yes," she continued, "it was all his doing, sure enough; and he said it was for her soul's good he did it, the crayer; and I don't know, no more than the dead, what's happened since we went away."

"How did you come here to Mr. Green's?" I asked.

"Sure, she ran away last night, while I was asleep, and I've been trapesing after her, all over the fields and bogs, ever since, till she run in here, where you see her."

"Do you mean to tell me she has been

kept a prisoner ever since the day she disappeared?"

"I dunno nothing about prisons," replied the woman, doggedly. "He putt her in a house, where we was comfortable, and he'd come and talk to her; and I've been with her, worse luck, ever since."

"Who put her?"

"Him that's dead and gone, rest his soul in glory!" replied the woman, crossing herself as she spoke.

"Do you mean the late Father O'Rafferty?"

Poor Mrs. Woodward, who had remained in the same crouching attitude ever since my arrival, and without apparently taking the slightest notice of what was said or done around her, was electrified into life at hearing the priest's name mentioned, and started to her feet with a loud and piercing scream.

"Keep him away! keep him away!—the monster! the wretch!—keep him away, keep him away!" she shrieked, in heart-rending accents. "Ah, doctor! Doctor Cochrane!—keep him away from me! keep him away!"

And exhausted by hunger, fatigue, and excitement, the poor creature fell in a swoon upon the floor.

"Is she dead, do you think?" asked Margery, calmly contemplating the poor woman, without making any offer to assist her.

"Oh, doctor! is she dead?" exclaimed good Mrs. Green, who had been attracted into the parlour by the screams—"is she dead, poor thing?"

"No," I replied, after feeling her pulse, and placing my hand on the feebly beating heart, "she is not, poor soul; though I feel almost tempted to wish she were."

"Sure nothing would be aiser," suggested Margery, with the malice of a fiend in her tone and look.

"Silence, woman!" I exclaimed, "how dare you?"

And the wretch retired, abashed, to the other side of the room; and, as soon as she thought she was unobserved, tried to open the door and escape.

I had my eye upon her, however; and, hastily springing, caught her by the shoulder, and forced her into a chair.

"Sit there!" I exclaimed, "or it will be worse for you."

As soon as I let go my hold, she jumped up, and flew at me like a tiger-cat, and

tried to scratch my face; but I kept her at arm's length, in spite of her frantic struggles; and finding her efforts useless she desisted, and sat down, and inquired in whining accents what I meant to do with her.

"You shall know all about it by and by," I replied. "In the meantime keep still, and it will be all the better for you."

The farmer coming in at that juncture, I confided Mistress Margery to his custody; and, assisted by Mrs. Green and her maid, we carried poor Mrs. Woodward to her bedroom upstairs, where she was promptly divested of her tattered and mud-bespattered rags, and put comfortably to bed.

"I'll sit with her, doctor, the poor soul!" volunteered the farmer's wife; "and you, Mary Jane," turning to her maid, "go directly and make her a good cup of tea—or, doctor, would a drop of whisky do her good?"

"We might try her with a few drops," I replied; "it may revive her better than anything else."

Mrs. Green hurried off to fetch the valuable and much-abused cordial; and when, upon her return, a small quantity had been poured between the unhappy woman's lips, she so far revived as to sit up and look vacantly around her.

The momentary gleam of intelligence, however, awakened by the odious name of the priest, had departed; nor were all our efforts to arouse her of the slightest avail.

She partook ravenously of some tea and bread which Mary Jane presently brought her, and called for "more."

When she had satisfied her appetite, she lay down quietly, and almost directly fell fast asleep, murmuring "Charles, dear Charles," over and over again.

Poor soul! it was a sad sight to gaze on the aged and withered features, the emaciated limbs and snow-white hair, and think of all that had reduced her to her present melancholy state; but it was sadder still to reflect upon the amount of misery her reappearance would inflict upon a truly happy home.

The police sergeant, as I have said, joined me in a shorter time than I could have supposed possible; and with him and Farmer Green I held a brief but anxious consultation.

Mr. Dobbie was absent, unfortunately, on his annual holiday in Scotland; and the sergeant advised that he should be summoned

home without delay by an urgent telegram, a course to which I agreed.

"And the curate?" suggested the farmer. "I think, doctor, he might be told."

"Yes," I replied; "and I suppose you told Mr. St. Clair?"

"I did," replied the farmer; "he passed when I was watching for you."

"I'm sorry for that, Mr. Green," put in the sergeant. "His reverence is right enough; but he's sure to tell Lady Georgina, and it might as well be posted on the town pump."

"It must be known sooner or later," I said.

"True for you, doctor," observed the farmer; "that's what the vicar said, when I told him to keep it quiet; but he wouldn't come in and look at her."

"Is she likely to live, doctor?" inquired the sergeant.

"Yes," I answered, "her bodily strength seems good."

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed the farmer, "it's a bad job altogether!"

"So it is," I replied. "I think we had better hear what Mr. Dobbie will say, before communicating with her husband."

"I don't know but what that might be the best plan," remarked the sergeant; "but what's to be done in the meantime?"

"Mr. Green," I said, "might keep her quietly here for the present."

"I will that," replied the farmer—"me and the missis'll manage all that part of the business for you, doctor; but what are you going to do with Margery?"

"That's what puzzles me," replied the sergeant; "I don't see on what charge we can take her up. Mayhap the best thing we can do will be to let her cut and run."

"You know more about the law than I do, sergeant," I replied; "but it seems to me she ought to be detained. Could she not be charged with conspiracy, or abduction?"

"No, doctor, no—I'm afraid not. You see, O'Rafferty is gone, and what could we prove? The poor lady upstairs aint in a position to give evidence against her; and so I think the best thing we can do with her will be to run her out of this, and let her gang her ain gate, as Mr. Dobbie would say."

"Well, sergeant, I must leave that to you; but I still think it will be best to keep her in custody until the agent returns."

"We might do that, too," replied the sergeant, doubtfully—"we might do that, doctor; but I don't see what we can prove against her."

"It will be known all over the country by to-morrow," I said; "but I wish it could have been kept out of the papers for one day."

"No one knows it," replied the farmer, "but me and the missus, and you two gentlemen, and Mr. St. Clair."

"Don't your servants?"

"Not one of them, doctor; they're all new hands here since the poor soul was lost, and don't even know Margery M'Anvil."

"That's right," remarked the sergeant. "Well, then, she must stay with you here for a bit—Mrs. Woodward, I mean—and we'll take the other up on suspicion, anyhow. Will you two gents come with me?" then inquired the sergeant.

"Where to?" I asked.

"Upstairs. You know I haven't seen the poor lady yet. I suppose there is no mistake; but I must judge for myself."

"Just so."

"Faith, there's no mistake about it, sergeant," replied the farmer; "you may take your oath of it, worse luck!"

We proceeded, all three of us, to the bedroom, and found the patient still sleeping peacefully. One glance at her sufficed to assure the sergeant of her unmistakable identity.

"It is herself," he said, beneath his breath, "and no mistake, this time."

"Now we'll go down to old Margery," continued the chief constable, as we turned to leave the room, and followed the farmer to his parlour or drawing-room, as the apartment I have described was indifferently called, and in which my ex-housekeeper had been, as we thought, securely locked whilst we had held our consultation in the kitchen.

Upon our entering the apartment, however, we found that the bird had flown. Dame Margery had broken a pane of glass, and effected her escape.

I expressed my annoyance; but the sergeant said—

"It's a good riddance of bad rubbish, any way, and will save us a world of trouble for nothing."

What became of the woman afterwards, I never knew; but doubtless she had friends who smuggled her out of the country, in which she never afterwards was seen.

TABLE TALK.

THEY say that example is better than precept. Perhaps it is, as a rule, but sometimes it is worse: for instance, in theatrical matters, as seen upon the programmes for which we are, at so many theatres, almost forced to pay sixpence or a shilling. [We beg to assure Mr. John Hollingshead and Mrs. Bancroft that they are not in our mind's eye.] Time back, some enterprising lessee made an addition to the customary "music by so and so—dresses by so and so;" and ever since, to use the words of one Steerforth, they have been "going it," till now we read in a string—that is, if we are stupid enough—the names of the stage manager, the dressmaker, the property man, the prompter, the conductor, the lime-lighter, and the gasman. This is sheer fact; and if it is to be the rule, by all means let it be well done. For instance, here are a few additions that might be made to the scented list. Stage waterer, Mr. Tompkins; collector of orange peel, Mr. Smith; carpet layers, Messrs. Thomas and John; scene shifters, Messrs. Shuffle, Rushe, Slip, Slider, and others; the violin strings by Twister and Company; charwoman, Mrs. Broome. If we were dealing with fifty years ago, we might have added—snuffers, Mr. Pinch.

MR. BURNAND is sometimes very happy in the way in which, by a few touches of his pen, he paints a rural portrait. Here is his sketch of a country postmaster:—"In partnership with his mother, he is proprietor of a cheese, bacon, and grocery shop, and this, and the post-office, they manage between them. He is a long young man, loosely put together, as if he'd been made up gradually, and added to at different times whenever there might have been some large bones to spare. His face, which is broad and round, and with a very uneven surface, is expressive of chronic astonishment at everything and everybody. I don't believe he was always like this. I fancy the telegraphic arrangements have frightened him, and that every arrival, or sending of a telegram, conveys a fresh galvanic shock to his nervous system, taking effect on his hair, which is very dry, and of the colour of one of his own pale Dutch cheeses. He has a desk to himself in one corner, where he attends to the Money Orders, occasionally disappearing, when the customer's back is turned, to

come up again in the character of a Telegraphic Clerk, in another corner, where the wires work among sides of bacon, sacks of dog biscuits, soap, cheeses, and red herrings. From this operation he emerges quite red in the face, as though they were saying *such* things by telegraph that no respectable young man could listen to without blushing."

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS of the Far West in 1873:—At Independence, in Missouri, a gentleman known as "Jim Crow Chiles" made himself very disagreeable in the streets of that city, and among other eccentricities of conduct, slapped the face of the Deputy-Marshal Peacock. The result of the slap is briefly stated as follows:—"Peacock drew his cane, and struck Chiles a blow which staggered him back; and the two men clenched, and engaged in a desperate struggle. During this struggle Chiles's revolver fell to the ground, and about the same time young Chiles fired a shot, which took effect on Deputy-Marshal Peacock's back; then young Peacock drew a revolver, and shot Jim Crow Chiles in the back; young Chiles shot young Peacock in the leg, young Peacock shot young Chiles in the breast, and the elder Peacock shot Jim Crow Chiles through the head, the ball entering the cheek, crashing through the brain, and coming out at the back of the head, killing him almost instantly. Another shot, by whom fired is not known, wounded Marshal Farrow in the breast."

A COUPLE of gentlemen have been charged at a police court with riotous behaviour, and the report says that they were in a state of "semi-intoxication." Of course, one side would argue that they were perfectly sober, or that they had taken very little. A Mantalini might arrange the discrepancy, and declare that they were in a state of "Demmy-semi-intoxication."

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 309.

November 29, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER LV.
THE CULPRIT.



AFTER the policemen had been at work about two hours, questioning, examining, searching, and finding out nothing, they returned to Sir Richard, who gazed at them inquiringly.

"Well, Sir Richard," said P.C. Wilkins, frankly, "we've done no good as yet."

"Let us see, then, together," said Sir Richard, bitterly. "Good God, men, we have wasted quite two hours. Here, come into my room. Now, here is my opinion," he said, to give them a clue, and to see if they would follow it up; for he had purposely refrained from saying anything so far, to try whether the unaided sense of the men would hit upon a new line. "Now, look here," said Sir Richard; "the facts are plain enough—the child has been stolen. He was left in the dining-room, with the window open, and now he is gone. Look first, and see if *you* think it possible for anybody to have climbed in from the outside. I do."

The two officers carefully examined the window from the inside, and then from the outside, to return and enunciate their opinion that it was quite possible for an active man to have climbed up the imitation projecting stones that ran up past the dining-room window. The only difficulty was—how

could it have been done in broad daylight without exciting attention from people passing to and fro?

The first policeman shook his head, and said it was a very queer go.

P.C. Wilkins, too, was dubious, and declared his opinion; and that was that nobody would climb up into that dining-room and steal a little boy, when there was over a hundred pounds' worth of silver lying to hand upon the table.

"Pish!" ejaculated Sir Richard. "Well, what are you going to do?"

"See about all followers who come to the house, for one thing, Sir Richard," said P.C. Wilkins, sagely; "women's sweethearts, and men's wives, if they have any."

"Yes," said Sir Richard, "that's a good idea, but it means nothing. Have you heard anything about a foreigner—a man?"

"That little Frenchman? Oh, yes, Sir Richard, I've put that down; but I don't think much of that."

"Then you are wrong," said Sir Richard, excitedly. "I tell you, the child has been stolen: I have not a doubt about the matter. I can even give you the name and appearance of the man who, I feel sure, is the principal actor in the affair. You doubt it?"

"Well, sir, yes, since you put it so."

"Never mind—I am sure this is your man. Trace him; find out whether he has been lurking about to-day. Search well, and you will find the child either with him, or amongst his associates."

P.C. Wilkins brought out his book, and Sir Richard gave him an accurate word-painting of Rivièrè; while Lady Lawler entered, and sat down with clasped hands and knitted brow, listening to every word.

"Only bring him back," she exclaimed at last, unable longer to restrain her pent-up feelings, "and anything you ask for shall be yours."

"Adelaide! Did you not promise me

that you would be silent?" exclaimed Sir Richard, impatiently.

"Yes, yes, I will," she said, meekly; and then she sat with pitiful aspect watching the constable, who suddenly brightened up.

"Why, begging your pardon, Sir Richard, this is the chap I took for 'sault and battery that night."

"To be sure—yes, the same."

"Ah-h-h-h-h!" ejaculated the man, with a very long-drawn whistle. "I see! Spite in the case, eh? That'll do, Sir Richard. You just leave the matter in our hands. It will be all right."

The baronet did not seem to see it in that light, but he was silent. Then, to avoid gossiping on the part of the servants, he let the officers out himself, thereby trapping Mr. Sellars, who was waiting in the big hall chair to cross-examine the constables in his turn.

Sir Richard returned to the dining-room, racked by the misery of his position. Here he stayed for a few minutes; and then, unable to bear the inaction any longer, he sent for a cab; but before it could possibly be fetched, he went out to meet it, and made the man gallop off to Scotland-yard, where he made known his case.

Here he was told to make himself perfectly easy. The description of the child would be sent all over London, and not many hours would elapse before it was safely returned.

Sir Richard shuddered as he heard that word safely; but he said nothing, only hurried back to his cab, and told the man to gallop back.

"He could not be such a fiend as to hurt a hair of his head," he muttered, as he sank into a corner; springing out the moment the cab pulled up, and entering to find that Lady Lawler had not moved from her seat since he had been away. She no sooner saw him, though, than she sprang to his side; and the next minute she was clinging to him and sobbing bitterly.

"Oh, Dick!" she cried—"oh, Dick! Tell me that he cannot hurt our darling. What have I done? Dick, dear Dick, be pitiful to your foolish wife!"

CHAPTER LVI.

TROUBLOUS TIMES.

AN anxious night and an anxious day. Lady Lawler had watched at home; Sir Richard had occupied himself in going from station to station seeking news, but

finding none. He learned at the Soho café Rivière's address, and went there to find that here the clue ended, save only that he might send a letter. He learned, though, here more of Rivière's affliction than he had known before; but it brought no softening of his heart towards the man whom he now bitterly hated.

On reaching home he had no reply to give to his wife's piteous look, and he sat down thoughtful and desponding, sore of heart, for he loved the little one dearly.

The doctor had strictly forbidden all questioning of Jane, to the great disappointment of "a quiet sort of party—a very ornery pusson," so James described him—a man who had been in and out a good deal that day, going down the area steps with an aspect of having a box of steel pens to leave, as an industrious tradesman in great distress. But he did not leave any pens; nor yet ask for subscribers' names to the New Topographical, Geographical, and Ethnographical Dictionary, to be issued in nine hundred penny numbers, published weekly.

In spite, though, of all his coming and going, and his colloquies with servants on the mat, and private interviews with Sir Richard and her ladyship in the study, nothing came at the end of a week, and Jane was still so ill that the very mention of the child's name sent her into a state of frenzy, which required the doctor's most powerful sedatives to calm.

Then there was news. Rivière had been found and watched; and this was announced to Sir Richard and his lady.

"Well?" they both exclaimed. "And the child—what have you learnt or seen—what was Rivière doing?"

"Well, Sir Rich'd," said the man, "to tell the truth, he was fiddlin'."

"Fiddling?"

"Yes, Sir Rich'd, scraping away wonderful, down in a little lodging off Leicester-square."

"But the child?"

"I can't see nothing or find nothing against him, Sir Richard," said the man, taking out his book. "You can have a warrant out against him, if you like; but unless you've got some case against a man, that won't do. Here's Louis Rivière's whereabouts for the last nine days.

"Sunday: French church and little caté. Monday: lodgings in the morning, Soho theatre rehearsal in the afternoon, orchestra

in the evening. Tuesday, the same; Wednesday, the same; Thursday, the same; and the same again Friday and Saturday. Sunday, repetition of Sunday before; and Monday, beginning again rehearsal, for they've got a new piece on the way, with a lot of singing and dancing in it; and he's one of the fiddlers. I've seen his lodgings when he's out, and altogether there isn't a thing, so far as I can see, against him."

"He must have been working by means of his agents," said Sir Richard, fiercely. "There, go! Spare no pains—no money to trace this out."

"I want to see that maid of yours, Sir Richard," said the man, quietly; "that's a nut I want to crack next; and perhaps it may have some kernel in it—perhaps not; but while I'm stopped from seeing her, how would it be if her ladyship here went up sometimes to her bedside, and tried to get a little out of her? It's worth trying."

Sir Richard nodded, and her ladyship rose eagerly to go, but the man arrested her.

"No hurry, my lady; and don't go in excited. Wait your time, and as soon as I have anything to communicate, I'll come."

He left the room, and Lady Lawler uttered a bitter cry.

"Don't be excited! Oh, what does the man think a mother's heart is like? Let me go to her now, Richard, and then let me go to this man, this Rivière. Oh! Richard, you judged us both wrongfully; but I believe he esteemed and liked me. Let me go to him as a bereaved mother—go down upon my knees to him, and beg of him forgiveness for us both. You injured him deeply; he suffered much. Let me make atonement for both, and ask him to give me back my child. He will listen to me, and hear me; he will give me back my darling if I humble myself to him. Oh! Richard, Richard!—I cannot bear this suspense much longer. Let me go to him, or I shall go mad."

"Hush, Addy. Pray, pray think. It is impossible; and, besides, we are in a position to command, not to go to him as suppliants. Wait awhile: the law is many-eyed and watchful. We have done something—we have found the lurking-place of our enemy; let us be content with that."

"But, Richard, let me go."

"Yes," he said, bitterly, "if you will let me go with you."

"That would be madness indeed: he would rise against you, and we should be worse

off than before. Richard, dear Richard, can you not trust me?—it is for our child's sake."

"It is impossible," said Sir Richard, sternly. "Wait and see. Do you not think I am as sore of heart as you? We have a cunning and unprincipled enemy to deal with, and we must meet him with the cunning that our money can buy. Now go quietly up, and see this woman."

Lady Lawler sighed and obeyed; returning at the end of an hour, anxious and wan.

"Well? Could you get her to speak?"

"Yes, Richard; but there is only a strengthening of that which we already know. She left the child for a few minutes while she went upstairs; when she came back he was gone."

"An accursed wretch!" cried Sir Richard, through his teeth.

"She says that in setting Fanny to watch him, she thought she had done all possible; and the poor creature is in horrible grief and suffering."

"Is she getting better?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Then let the police see her as soon as possible; then let her leave this house for good; for if I come across her—if I ever set eyes upon her again, I feel that I cannot contain myself."

"Oh, Richard, what do you mean?" sobbed Lady Lawler.

"Mean!" exclaimed her husband. "I mean that I feel as if I could strangle her, with as little remorse as I could some venomous beast that had stung me to my death."

CHAPTER LVII.

SIR RICHARD'S VISIT.

MATTERS remained unchanged in Grosvenor-square. Jane grew better by degrees, and one of her first acts was to write a letter to Abram Higgs, telling him on no account to come and see her for the present; that the little boy was lost, and that there was a terrible outcry about it; that she was not to blame, that she loved the little thing dearly; and the result would be that she (Jane) would be sure to have to leave, and trust to those who cared for her for a home.

Jane would have added a line telling her *fiancé* that he need not answer that letter, only she knew that there was no necessity, for Abram could barely write his own name.

She learned, though, that he had twice waylaid fellow-servants to ask after her health, and she could not help feeling a thrill of pleasure at his fidelity.

Then came three or four arduous examinations and cross-examinations, wherein Jane told again and again her story, every word of which was as simple and straightforward as could be. She only suppressed one thing, and that was the coming of Abram Higgs.

"If I tell about him," argued Jane to herself, "it will be ruin for both of us: he will be in difficulties as well as myself. I am certain to lose my place; but that is no reason why he should lose his, and deprive himself of the chance of offering me a home."

Here Jane sobbed a good deal, and mentally vowed that if she could only get well over this terrible trial, she would never, never again do anything deceitful or underhanded.

Sir Richard at last took Jane's part against the law. He said it was little better than folly to torture her. She had told all that she knew—that was evident. Her fault was in leaving the child; for which her punishment had been already settled—she was to be dismissed.

Inquiry after inquiry was made. The police, stimulated by rewards, went off upon this track, and upon that track. Now, the idea was in the official mind that one or other of the itinerant dealers who had urged Jane to buy when at the window must have been of gipsy blood, and, true to their old traditions, have carried off the child; the result being that casual wards were searched and tramps' resorts visited in and out of London, and child after child brought for Sir Richard and his lady to identify.

For all of these proceedings Sir Richard had a frown. He was certain of one thing, and that was that Rivière had the child; and no matter what the police said of their inquiries, watchings, and examinations, he remained stubbornly fixed in the one idea that Rivière, his enemy, had done this; till the officers shrugged their shoulders, grew less energetic—worn out, as they were, with disappointment—and took up fresh cases, running new game to earth; the lost child, after the nine days' wonder, being displaced in the public mind by a cause célèbre.

Sir Richard did not rest alone in his ideas, for Lady Lawler in silence shared them; but, as the days glided by, each sorrowed in private—the child's name was not

even mentioned, though they were both brooding over the same thought, and making the same plans.

Sir Richard was the first to put his in force; and, without saying a word, he one day sought the dingy place where the police informed him they had, after infinite trouble, found Rivière to be lodging.

It was in one of those wretched, densely populated streets where a well-dressed person is so seldom seen. Traffic, save that of foot passengers, there was none; the result being its forming a playground for the teeming life of the place. Upon every other doorstep there was a little girl or boy nursing one a trifle less, and screaming out orders to others in the roadway. Shuttlecocks were flying, and balls being thrown in various directions; children were playing a kind of hop-scotch on the chalked pave; a couple of barrow-men steering their course the while through the ragged, dirty, juvenile swarm, and yelling their vegetable and fishy wares.

The door of the house Sir Richard sought was open, and upon one doorpost was a row of bellpulls; but from their loose and mutilated aspect, it was plain that appeals made in that way would be of doubtful effect, the union between handle and wire in more than one case having terminated in a divorce sacred to silence.

He paused for a few minutes, and then, recalling the instructions he had received, determined to mount at once without question; when a baby-bearing urchin came and stood staring up in his face, at the imminent risk of being trampled upon, and asked him if he wanted Mrs. Simpkins?

"No, my child, go away," said Sir Richard.

"Cause she's my mother," said the child.

Sir Richard hastily walked by, and commenced ascending the creaking staircase, wondering whether it would be looked upon as a trouble if one or both of the children he had just seen thriving in that dirt should be lost.

It was a dingy ascent. Paint that had been placed upon the walls fifty years before was coming off like a thin bark from a tree that is dead. At every floor he came upon a foul door, blackened with finger marks, greasy and ill-looking; but at last he stood on the topmost landing, where the sloping roof compelled him to stoop, and he hesitated for a few moments before he ven-

tured to lay his hand upon the door to enter.

For what had he come? To threaten or to implore—whichever might be needed: anything so as to get a clue to where the child had been placed. He hesitated, though, now that he was here—here in this vile region. Suppose Rivière—now, of course, sunk into an equality with the people around—should summon some of them to his aid, and in some way take revenge upon him!

Pooh! it was absurd—romantic; and, turning the handle, he strode in unannounced, to stand the next moment face to face with the Frenchman.

The surprise was so great that for a few seconds neither spoke—Rivière being astounded that Sir Richard should have come there; Sir Richard wondering, from the terrible alteration that had taken place in Rivière, whether he had not made a mistake, and visited the wrong man.

He was not long in doubt, though, for the change that took place in Rivière warned him that he stood in the presence of a deadly enemy. The little Frenchman, as he cast down the cigarette he had been smoking, slowly rose from a broken chair, his eyes gleaming, and his thin lips drawn tightly away from his teeth, which shone white and cruel, as those of some savage beast. With an action that seemed almost spasmodic, he plunged his hand into his breast, but drew it out again as suddenly; and then, pointing towards the door with his thin, quivering fingers, he gasped out, in a voice that was harsh and even metallic in its shrillness—

"Go—if you wish to live, go; or I shall have you—"

He did not finish his sentence; but, as if unable to contain himself longer, he thrust aside the table between them, and made at Sir Richard, who started back through the door, and stood on the other side holding it tightly, trembling the while all over, even as a brave-hearted man might shiver after escaping the spring of some wild beast. The perspiration stood out upon his forehead, and he dragged at the handle, imagination telling him that the Frenchman was exerting all his might on the other side. At one time he thought of calling for help, but he remained silently listening for the next movements of his enemy. The only sounds that came up were the murmurings of voices

in the house, and the cries and shouts of the playing children in the street.

Why did he come there? he asked himself. He might be murdered, and the crime never discovered; for none knew of his coming.

At length his nervous trepidation passed off. No effort was made to drag open the door; and, calling himself coward the while, he slowly unclasped the handle, expecting each moment to stand again face to face with Rivière, glaring, maddened, and savage; and then, stiff with remaining so long in one position, he slowly backed down the stairs, ignorant that, as far from the door as he could get, Rivière was crouching in a corner, his fingers pressed into his ears, his eyes closed, and his every force engaged in battling with the horrible homicidal mania that had seized upon him.

Reaching the second floor, Sir Richard breathed more freely, and even thought of returning; but the recollection of the savage glare of the Frenchman's eyes made him shudder, and descend slowly the rest of the way, till he stood once more in the free daylight, the dingy light and foul, stale odour of the house, though, still clinging to his senses as he picked his way through the swarming children.

What had he done? Nothing—learned nothing, save that Rivière's hate for him was deadly in the extreme.

He strode away, disheartened and angry, at times calling himself coward, then determining to try once more for information through the police; but ending by thinking that he would wait for awhile—wait and see whether anything would happen to throw light upon the past. Then he felt that his behaviour had been that of a cur: he had stood face to face with the man who had bereft him of his child, and yet he had shrunk from him. He found some excuse, though, in the act he had seen Rivière perform—that thrusting of his hand into his breast.

"These foreigners think no more of shedding blood than we do of knocking a man down," he muttered; and then, turning into Oxford-street, he mingled with the busy stream.

CHAPTER LVIII.

LADY LAWLER'S MISSION.

SIR RICHARD LAWLER had now come to think that his harsh suspicions of Rivière were groundless; and Lady Law-

ler, on her part, had determined that for the future her conduct should be of the most circumspect. Nothing should induce her to act in any way so as to give her husband a pang. The incense of Rivière had been very sweet to her: flattery and attention had been at one time almost necessary to her existence. But, for the future, she vowed that nothing should ever induce her to take a step that would in any way annoy her husband.

She thought this one half-hour, and the next she was brooding over an idea that had occurred to her. Unwittingly she had come to the same determination as Sir Richard—namely, to visit Rivière and appeal to him; even as Abigail of old appealed for mercy to David on behalf of Nabal.

"He will listen to me," she said. "He was always kind. He must have had some feeling of the warmest friendship for me in the past, or he would not have been so attentive.

"He is under an obligation—many obligations to me," she thought again; and, in spite of herself, a warm flush spread over her neck and face.

"I'll go and beg of him to give me back my boy!" she exclaimed, almost hysterically, as she mentally pictured the scene, growing each moment more excited and nervous.

She felt that she could not tell Sir Richard; for if she did, he would certainly insist upon going with her; and in that case, of course, she must give up all thought of such a proceeding, as it would only result in some fresh terrible encounter. She felt a horror of Rivière now that she accused him of this act—this cruel deed by which, in his revenge upon the father, he had not scrupled to lacerate the mother's heart.

"I will go to him," she exclaimed, determinedly, "and he shall give me back my boy."

Then the recollection of her loss sent her back into her chair, to weep hysterically for awhile, till she rose once more firm and determined, and set about her preparations for the visit.

Now, to an ordinary body such a proceeding would mean waiting till the husband had gone to the city, and then putting on bonnet and shawl, and going. But Lady Lawler was in society, and her first necessary step was to counter-order the carriage, her next to give notice to the servant on duty that she was not at home, and her next to invent

some excuse for going out walking and alone.

Possibly if she had quietly gone upstairs, dressed, and then walked out, her absence would have been quite unnoticed, and the first warning of her having left the house would have been in her return, when one of the men answered her summons at the door; but Lady Lawler had no sooner resolved upon her plan than she looked upon herself as a deeply designing conspirator, and came to the conclusion that her every act was being carefully watched; and she trembled accordingly.

She made her arrangements, dismissed her maid, and then, as plainly dressed as she could contrive to be, she stood closely veiled within her bed-room door, waiting for an opportunity to descend.

There was nothing to prevent her immediate exit, for the servants were all out of sight and hearing; but every sound that went through the house made her shrink back trembling, and half decided not to attempt to leave.

Then she got the better of her dread, stamped her foot angrily, and asked herself whether she were not mistress there; and after half a dozen futile efforts, screwed her courage up to the point which enabled her to leave the bed-room, and to descend slowly; but before she had gone half-way down, she became aware of the fact that some one was ascending; and a moment or two afterwards she came face to face with Jane, who, pale and nervous, shrank against the wall, and stood watching her till she was in the hall.

"She knows where I am going—I am sure she does," muttered Lady Lawler. "If I had only started before, or waited five minutes, I might have gone off unobserved."

"She's as much against me as he is," muttered Jane, as her lady disappeared from her sight. "I shall have to go, of course. It shall be at once, then."

But second thoughts induced Jane to alter her mind.

"No," she said, "I'll wait till they send me away."

Meanwhile Lady Lawler crossed her own hall by stealth, trembling, drew back the fastening of the great door, and hurried out, not daring to look to the right or left, lest she should encounter her husband's angry gaze; and then, with the dread still troubling her that she was watched—that every

one who passed her was gazing at her with suspicious eyes, and was ready to divine the object of her journey—she walked on faster and faster, expecting in her nervousness each moment that a restraining hand would be laid upon her shoulder, and that she would be led back, humbled and disgraced.

The magnitude of that which she was attempting increased to her troubled mind each moment, and she was several times on the point of turning back; only the recollection of the influence she hoped to have upon Rivière urged her on.

She had heard too often, in the interviews with the police, not to know well where Rivière was now lodging; but, in spite of all she had heard, she had never conceived so low and squalid a place as that through which she at last bent her steps. And now she had some cause for her imaginings; for her tall, stately figure and flowing dress drew plenty of gazers, till, panting and ready to drop with excitement, she reached the number in the wretched street, hurried into the passage, and stood there glad of its gloom as a protection from the eyes of the curious.

Recovering somewhat, she knocked at the first door she saw, and a repulsive-looking woman, after a few moments, thrust out her head.

A CURIOUS TRIAL.

TEMPUS CHARLES I.

THE case of an extraordinary murder in Hertfordshire, found amongst the papers of that eminent lawyer, Sir John Maynard, serjeant-at-law, and some time one of the Lords Commissioners of the Great Seal of England:—

“The case, or rather history of a case, that happened in the county of Hertford, I thought good to report here, which happened in the fourth year of King Charles I., that the memory of it may not be lost by the miscarriage of my papers, or otherwise. I wrote the evidence that was given, which I and many others did hear; and I wrote it exactly according to what was deposed at the trial at the bar of the King’s Bench.

“Jane Norkott, the wife of Arthur Norkott, being murdered, the question was—how she came by her death?

“The coroner’s inquest, on a view of the body, and depositions of Mary Norkott, John Okeman, and Agnes, his wife, were inclined to find Jane Norkott a *felo de se*; for they

informed the coroner and the jury, ‘That she was found dead in her bed, the knife sticking in the floor; that the night before, she went to bed with her child—plaintiff in this appeal—her husband being absent, and that no other person, after such time as she was gone to bed, came into the house, the examiners lying in the outer room, and they must needs have seen or known if any stranger had come in;’ whereupon the jury gave up to the coroner a verdict that she was *felo de se*. But afterwards upon rumour amongst the neighbourhood, and their observation of divers circumstances, which manifested that she did not nor could possibly—according to those circumstances—murder herself; thereupon the jury, whose verdict was not yet drawn into form by the coroner, assented, and desired the coroner that the body which was buried might be taken up out of the grave, which the coroner assented unto; and thirty days after her death she was taken up, in the presence of the jury and a great number of people. Whereupon the jury changed their verdict; and the persons being tried at Hertford assizes, were acquitted, but so much against the evidence that Judge Harvey let fall his opinion, that it were better an appeal were brought than so foul a murder escape unpunished. And, *Paschæ quarto Caroli*, they were tried on the appeal which was brought by the young child against ‘his father, grandmother, and aunt, and her husband Okeman,’ and because the evidence was so strange, I took exact and particular notice. And it was as follows:—

“After the matters above-mentioned related, an ancient and grave person, ‘minister to the parish where the fact was committed,’ being sworn to give evidence, according to custom, deposed, ‘That the body being taken up out of the grave, thirty days after the party’s death, and lying on the grass, and the four defendants being present, were required each of them to touch the dead body. Okeman’s wife fell upon her knees, and prayed God to show tokens of her innocence. The appellant did touch the dead body; whereupon the brow of the dead, which before was a livid and carrion colour—in terminis, the verbal expression of the witness—began to have a dew or gentle sweat arise on it, which increased by degrees till the sweat ran down in drops on the face; the brow turned to a lively and fresh colour, and the deceased opened one of her eyes and shut it again; and this open-

ing the eye was done three several times. She likewise thrust out the ring or marriage finger three times, and pulled it in again, and the finger dropped blood from it on the grass.'

"Sir Nicholas Hyde, chief justice, seeming to doubt the evidence, asked the witness—

" 'Who saw this besides you?'

"Witness: 'I cannot swear what others saw; but, my lord,' said he, 'I do believe the whole company saw it; and if it had been thought a doubt, proof would have been made of it, and many would have attested with me.'

"Then the witness, observing some admiration in the auditors, spake further—

" 'My lord, I am minister of the parish, and have long known all the parties, but never had occasion of displeasure against any of them, nor had to do with them or they with me, but as I was a minister, the thing was wonderful to me; but I have no interest in the matter, but as called upon to testify to the truth, and that I have done.'

"This witness was a very reverend person, as I guessed, about seventy years of age. His testimony was delivered gravely and temperately, and to the great admiration of the auditory. Whereupon, applying himself to the chief justice, he said—

" 'My lord, my brother here present is minister of the next parish adjacent, and I am sure saw all done that I have affirmed.'

"Therefore that person was also sworn to give evidence, and did depose in every point, 'the sweating of the brow, the change of the colour, thrice opening the eye, and the thrice motion of the finger, and drawing it in again;' only the first witness added that he himself dipped his finger in the blood which came from the dead body to examine it, and he swore he believed it was blood.

"I conferred afterwards with Sir Edward Powell, barrister-at-law, and others, who all concurred in the observation; and for myself, if I were upon oath, can depose that these depositions—especially the first witness—are truly reported in substance.

"The other evidence given against the prisoners—viz., the grandmother of the plaintiff, and against Okeman and his wife, that they confessed they lay in the next room to the dead body that night, and that none came into the house till they found her dead the next morning; therefore, if she did not

murder herself, they must be the murderers. To that end further proof was made.

"First, That she lay in a 'composed manner in her bed, the bedclothes undisturbed, and her child by her in bed.'

"Secondly, 'Her throat cut from ear to ear, and her neck broke.' So that if she first cut her throat, she could not possibly break her neck in bed. *Non contra.*

"Thirdly, 'There was no blood in the bed, saving a tincture of blood on the bolster whereon her head lay, but no substance of blood at all.'

"Fourthly, 'From the bed's head there was a stream of blood on the floor, which ran along until it ponded in the bendings of the floor to a very great quantity; and there was also another stream of blood on the floor at the bed's foot, which ponded also on the floor to a very great quantity; but no continuance or communication of blood of either of these two places, from one to the other, neither upon the bed,' so that she bled in several places; and it was deposed, turning up the mat of the bed, 'that there were clots of congealed blood in the straw of the mat underneath.'

"Fifthly, 'The bloody knife was found in the morning sticking in the floor, a good distance from the bed; but the point of the knife, as it stuck, was towards the bed, and the haft from the bed.'

"Lastly, 'There was the print of a thumb and forefingers of a left hand.'

"Sir Nicholas Hyde, chief justice: 'How can you know the print of a left hand from the print of a right hand in such a case?'

"Witness: 'My lord, it is hard to describe; but if it please that honourable judge to put his left hand upon your left hand, you cannot possibly place your right hand in the same posture;' which being done, and appearing so, the defendants had time to make their defence, but gave no evidence to any purpose.

"The jury departed from the bar; and returning, acquitted Okeman, and found the other three guilty; who being severally demanded why judgment should not be pronounced, said nothing, but severally—

" 'I did not do it, I did not do it.'

"Judgment was given, and the 'grandmother and husband executed;' but the aunt had the privilege to be spared execution, being with child. I inquired if they confessed anything at their execution, but they did not, as I was told."

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER XII.

"The accusing spirit, which flew up to heaven's chancery with the oath, blushed as he gave it in; and the recording angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word and blotted it out for ever."—*Sterne*.

AFTER parting with Captain Nolan, not many minutes elapsed before Agnes had passed through the shrubbery, and was crossing the drive in front of the house. On looking down the avenue, she distinctly saw something moving slowly up it. Her first impulse was to hide behind a bush, and there wait the dénouement; but thinking that perhaps it might be more agreeable to have a stone wall between herself and the unknown, she slipped quickly round to the back of the house, and, entering there, walked noiselessly through the passages to the hall; where, curling herself up on one of the window-sills, behind a heavy red curtain, she lay perdu, and again turned her attention to the object in the drive.

The something without shape had now taken the form of a vehicle and two quad-rupeds—there was no doubt of that; but who could be coming to the Hall at that time of night? If Johnson had been at home, she would certainly have called him to her assistance; but that tried and faithful servant was not to the fore, having gone with Mrs. Manning to Tarnwater; and, feeling death preferable to showing signs of fear before the other domestics, she could only wait and watch. On a nearer approach, from its uneven roll and the peculiar gait of two angular steeds of unequal height, it was easy to recognize a country fly, drawn by a requisitioned team. Then she became exceedingly puzzled, for there seemed to be two men on the box, one bearing a strong resemblance to the faithful Johnson; but what could he be doing there, when he ought by this time to be safe in bed at Tarnwater? Could anything have happened to Mrs. Manning?

Agnes' heart sank as the thought flashed through her mind, and she anxiously strained her eyes in vain endeavours to pierce through the old leathern hood of the antiquated vehicle.

She was not, however, left long in doubt; for, on the carriage drawing up, Johnson, in flesh and blood, carefully scrambled

down, and commenced a furious assault on the bell handle. Great was the consternation wrought in the back regions—where the servants, on Captain Nolan's principle, were holding high revel—by the ringing of that bell. The screams and laughter of the women grated painfully on Agnes' ears, as the footman, endeavouring to get into somebody else's coat, hurriedly entered the hall in a disordered state.

At last the door was opened, and Mrs. Manning, supported by Johnson, and leaning on her maid's arm, was conveyed into the hall, where, resting a few minutes before going upstairs, she gave orders that on no account was Agnes to be disturbed, as she felt much better, and did not wish her to be unnecessarily frightened. One by one the servants, with white and scared faces, dropped into the hall, and stood in a group at the foot of the stairs, whispering inquiries, one to the other, which nobody could answer.

Agnes was so stunned by her aunt's unexpected midnight return, that she did not fully comprehend what had taken place until Mrs. Manning disappeared upstairs; then, wishing to follow her, she peered out from beneath the heavy red curtains, but, seeing all the servants assembled in the hall, felt unwilling to encounter them; so, perforce, remained an unwilling auditor to their remarks.

"What is it?" said one.

"How can I tell? I wasn't here," said another.

"Ask Charles, he let 'em in," said the eminently practical kitchen-maid.

"Tell us all about it, Charles," unanimously exclaimed the group.

"You see, I was taken in such a flurry, I couldn't get the door open; and thinking them outside might be no good, asked 'em their business. 'What do you want?' says I. 'Open the door, you fool!'" (the latter part of his superior's address he wisely suppressed, feeling it would not conduce to his present importance) "says Mr. Johnson. On hearing his voice, it put me in such a trembling, that to my dying day I shall never know how I did it; but I did open the door, and then in walks missis, as white as a ghost, and looking altogether as if she had stepped out of her grave."

Chorus of feminine voices—"What had happened? Was there a railway accident? What did she say?"

"Something very awful must have happened, but she didn't say nothing."

Chorus—"But we were behind the door, and heard her speak."

"She only said Miss Lane was not to be disturbed; so, Mary, don't you go and tell her all you have seen and heard to-night."

"No fear of that," said Mary, with an offended toss of her head. "My young lady never speaks to me now. I am thinking she has got some one better to talk to."

"You are a sensible girl, Mary," said Charles, patronizingly. "I told Green, when he said he had met him loafing about the woods, that that there captain was after our young lady."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth ere he had cause bitterly to repent their utterance; for Johnson, coming downstairs, overheard the latter part of the conversation, and now swooped down like an avenging angel on the gossiping group.

With smothered cries of "Oh!" "Yah!" "Lawks have mercy!" the chorus vanished, leaving the unfortunate Charles in the hands of the indignant butler, who, with a preliminary shake, gave him, as he tersely expressed it, "a bit of his mind."

"I should like to know what business it is of yours to go defaming the family with scandalous tales before a pack of tattling women, for them to go cackling all over the village." (Shake No. 2 while pausing for breath.) "Do you suppose gentlemen go loafing about a house like such as you? No; they always comes to the head of the house, and asks permission to court the young ladies." (Here another violent shake, which brought the borrowed garment under Mr. Johnson's wrathful eyes.) "What is this?" he exclaimed, in an exasperated voice, plucking at the sleeve of the questionable coat. "Do you call this your livery? I tell you what it is, young man—unless you mend your manners, and that pretty sharp, a month's warning and a bad character is what you will get."

"It was all the women. There was no satisfying them. I told 'em I knowed nothing," whimpered out the now penitent footman.

"Don't stand gawping there, but go and put up the plate, which I warrant me is all left about, ready for the first robber who may choose to walk in and take it."

However much the faithful Johnson and Mrs. Miggs, the housekeeper and personal

servant of Mrs. Manning, might talk over the family affairs, of which they knew more than their mistress, having been brought up in the house, they considered any discussion on this subject among the lower servants as a direct infringement on their exclusive rights, and to be summarily put down on every occasion.

"I may make something out of that young man yet, for he is beginning to be aware of his own hignorance," soliloquized the ancient retainer, as he retired from the hall, having made, by the aid of one candle of twelve in the pound, a careful inspection of the fastenings of the hall door.

If you take up what young ladies call (whether ironically I know not) their "Book of Characters," you invariably see at the top of each leaf, facing each other, the following question and answer:—

Q. "What is your favourite virtue?"

A. "Truth."

I agree with those young ladies. I flatter myself that truth is my chief virtue. Kind people say it is my only one; and as, being mortal, I own to no faults, therefore I am the personification of Truth itself. My fair friends, when I ask them the meaning of their favourite virtue, explain to me that "truth is truth." Now, I define Truth as a not altogether agreeable attribute—ergo, Truth is (that is to say, I am) disagreeable. Having only been gifted with this one exceptional virtue, I am naturally proud of it, and intend sticking to my colours, even at the risk of ruining the character of my heroine for ever in the eyes of the self-righteous.

Of truth, with the addition of the little consonant *s*, there is plenty in the world. We have all heard of unpleasant truths, which partake much of the cut-and-thrust principle; some of us know what it is to have these pleasantly told us by disinterested persons, purely for our own good. Then there are home truths; these latter are rarely handled by men—they are the poisoned bodkins of women's warfare. Lastly, there are painful truths; and it is one of this class that I am now committing to paper.

"Confound those servants!" muttered Agnes between her clenched teeth, when the hall was finally cleared.

Before condemning her, pause. I ask you

—you who have been stung to the quick, you who have felt mortification's bitterest pang, you who have had your pride crushed, your spirit trampled under foot, your wounds laid bare to a scoffing world—has there never been a time when you, bowed down by bitter anguish, have not done likewise, even though your next prayer rose to Heaven? I do not say you made use of the exact words she did, but the same in effect. You "wished you were dead," or "had never been born"—there are a hundred different expressions; but they all mean the same thing, and emanate from the same place. I do not ask the comfortable, easy-going, or the poor lackadaisical, sentimental portion; for how dare they judge of things they wot not of?

"Good heavens!" thought Agnes, pressing her trembling hands against her white and quivering lips, "and has it come to this, that the very servants are talking about us, while my poor aunt—may God spare her!—does not even know I have met him more than twice? Johnson was right; why should he come sneaking about the house, as if he were ashamed of himself? I told him we should be found out, that it would be much better to tell Aunt Manning at once. Of course, she would be angry at first; but in time she would come round, and get to like him, when she saw how dearly I loved him; for I do, though I hate myself for it. How I should have laughed at any one this time last year telling me that I, who boasted of my utter abhorrence to all that was mean and underhand, in a few short months would be secretly engaged to some one I had not then even seen; and proud of it too, for I am. Who would not be proud of Phil? He is so noble, so kind, so handsome. Why, he might have any girl in the world, and yet—yet he only loves me."

Here she rested her burning temples against the cold window-pane, which, together with her new train of thoughts, soon brought her down again to an even temperature.

"It seems quiet now," said she peering out from between the curtains, and listening attentively.

Hearing no sounds, she stole softly upstairs, and, feeling an irrepressible desire to see her aunt, crept noiselessly along the passage, and knocked gently at Mrs. Manning's boudoir door, which was opened with alacrity by Mrs. Miggs.

"Is she much worse, Miggs?" whispered Agnes.

"Dear me, no, miss; she is asleep now, and seems much better since she got home."

"Tell me, has she had a fit—or anything of that kind?"

"No, miss; but if you will sit down by the fire, I will tell you all about it. I told Mr. Johnson it was only natural you should ask what had happened, and I considered it my duty to let you know all the particulars."

"Yes, thank you, go on."

"You remember, miss, it was a very nice carriage we got into at the Heathfield Station; there was only my mistress, me, and one lady and gentleman—Johnson was in a second-class behind us—"

"Yes, yes—I know all that. I saw you off," impatiently uttered Agnes.

"Well, miss, we had not been in the train better than half an hour, when my mistress turns to me and says—"

"'Miggs,' says she, 'I shall never see the sea again. I am very ill.'"

"'Mercy, ma'am!' says I; 'shall I stop the train?'"

"'No,' says she, leaning her head on my shoulder, and breathing very hard; 'but I will get out at the next station and rest a little, and then drive home, for we cannot have come far.'"

"The lady and gentleman in the carriage were most obliging. They lent me some salts and brandy, and seemed quite to take on about my mistress. When we stopped at the next station, the gentleman says—"

"'What can I do for you?'"

"'Sir,' says I, 'if you would be so obliging as to go to the next carriage behind us, and ask Mr. Johnson to step this way, then I think we shall be able to manage'—and he jumped out and fetched him at once. Then Johnson and me, between us, got my mistress into an hotel outside the station—quite an old-fashioned affair; not at all like the Royal we stay at in Tarnwater. As soon as she was seated in the best parlour, my mistress began to look worse; and the landlady, a very civil-spoken young person, comes in and says how she thinks we ought to have the doctor, and if we liked she would send one of her own men to fetch him. So he came, and a very nice-looking, clever young gentleman he was. He asked me and Johnson a great many questions, and

shook his head very much at our answers. He told my mistress that she had had a fit of the spasms, and must rest for some hours before it would be wise for her to drive; that we were twenty miles from Heathfield Hall, and the roads were very bad. Still, as she seemed so anxious to return home, he would see about getting her a carriage and pair, with a steady driver; but was afraid he should have great difficulty in finding them, as there was a Volunteer review going on in the town. And, poor young gentleman, he had a business about them horses; for all those in the town were already in the cabs and omnibuses, and they were all too tired to go the distance. But at last he did get two from some butchers who had come into the town to see the soldiers, and said they did not mind waiting all night at the hotel for their horses if my mistress would pay them beforehand. Settling all this took up so much time, that it was nearly eight o'clock in the evening when we started for home; and I hope I may never have such another drive in the dark again," concluded Miggs.

MY BULL HUNT.

READER, did you ever hunt bulls? If not, then take our *Charivari's* "advice to those about to marry" on the subject.

I wanted to hunt bulls. I had read with fiery ardour the thrilling account about the subjection of that famous beast of Chillingham; and, oh! I yearned to do the like. I longed to track down the monarch of the pasture, out free upon his pathless wilds, and there to show myself worthy of my foe, and give (myself) a proof of inherent self-possession, calmness of purpose, and deadly strength of nerve. How I had pondered over it, and revelled in the feast of my prophetic imaginations! To track the great mammoth upon his native heath; to see him in his boyine haunts; to be all alone with him, face to face, at his secluded lair! This—this *would* be sport.

The time arrived. I need not say how. It would deprive my narrative of its romance if I related the fact of my meagre, overprized fortnight's holi—vacation, I mean, crowning at length the weary toils of a year. Of course, I don't descend to business; no, I'm an "adventurous youth" (that's the term!), full of pedigree, and high blood, and vigour, and spirits, and all that.

Well, I was going to spend one-half of my va—that is, the time I was about to devote to "a run in the country for a shot"—at a farmhouse, say in Berkshire; and the other half of that time with a friend in the north of Scotland. There, in that latter place, was my achievement, my long longed-for feat, to be carried into execution, to become an actual fact, and be stored away in the annals of my diary.

I was at the Berkshire farmhouse, and was going out after luncheon for a walk; so I asked my host if he'd got any bulls on his establ—on his land.

Yes—one. A very fine animal; new, perfectly quiet; was in a field, away so-and-so, about a mile and a half. Why did I ask?

"Oh, nothing! Only I thought I should like to go and see this bull—to see what I think of him, you know."

Should he go with me?

"Thanks, no—I had rather go alone, and have a quiet pipe along the meadows."

Reader, I was dissembling. I wanted to see that bull, because I thought that to examine him carefully (especially a *quiet* one like him), and to scrutinize his eye—that target-spot where the bullet should enter on its deadly errand at the critical moment—would do me good; would give me practice, as it were, for my coming sojourn in the north.

I meandered forth. I wandered across woodlands, and through pastures, over hill and dale; and everywhere I was saluted with the joyous harmonies of summer's gladness. All nature was singing, and my heart was light; and—and—I chanced to look up, and there, right before me, stood that noble Emperor of the meadow. Awe-inspiring and grand he looked, with stately pride erect, in all the conscious possession of symmetry and power. (You should go and see.)

Afraid, did you say? Ahem, what?—a—how do you mean? I—I scarcely understand you.

I happened to want to smoke just at that moment, and suddenly remembered I had left my light-box behind. I wanted to smoke at once. I was in a considerable hurry for a smoke; so I started off, there and then, after my light-box. I did not walk, because I wanted to smoke immediately, and so I advanced with some celerity. I may say, I ran. I was really anxious for a smoke, you understand.

Now you come to call my attention to the fact, I think I *did* hear something like the sound of that bull following me. I suppose he was taking a little exercise around the field, but really I scarcely noticed it at the time.

However, I arrived at the boundary wall of the meadow, and feeling inclined for a rest for a moment after my walk, I jumped on the top of it. The bull also arrived at that wall just after me. Of course, he remained below. He looked up at me, and I looked down at him. It was a capital opportunity for examining his eye, and I took advantage of it. You see, we were not far off each other, and I was quite close enough to take my observations. I mean, I had no occasion to get down in order to be nearer the bull—I could see quite distinctly from where I was.

Presently I lit my pipe, and after I had done that, I noticed that I had my light-box with me all the time. Just think of that—all the run for nothing! I also began to wonder whether bulls—wild bulls, you know—ever ran at people; if so, it was a very lucky thing for me that this was a quiet bull.

He was very tame—quite domesticated, in fact. He would not even go away; but there he stayed, close to the wall, and looking up at me as if he wanted to make friends. Then he switched his tail—brush, I should say—about a bit; and occasionally took a turn around in a small circle, and stamped, and snorted, and pawed the verdant sod for a time. It was quite interesting to watch him in his native state; and now and then, when he had done these antics, he would make for the wall, and try to get upon it. I suppose he wanted me to stroke him, or scratch his throat, or something—like we do Pussy at home.

And when I had lit my pipe, and thrown away the vesuvian, I am sorry to say that it accidentally alighted on the bull's shoulders. I am correct in my expression that it alighted there, because in about seven-sixteenths of an instant a little puff of blue smoke, from frizzled hair, came up, and the bull immediately began to lose his temper. He got quite violent. I felt sorry for him, because, you understand, I saw that the poor animal was in pain; and I had half a mind to get down and take off the nasty vesuvian, and pat him, and afford him some little comfort by kindness; but it did not go beyond half a mind.

At length I perceived that the bull was really out of temper—indeed he looked at me quite angrily sometimes; and then it struck me that perhaps it might not be quite safe for me to get down. So I waited and waited, but the bull would not go away; and I smoked pipe after pipe, until all my tobacco was gone.

I regret to say that the bull went and got right under one or two other vesuvians as I threw them away. It was a great pity, because I felt sure they must have hurt him sometimes; indeed, he once or twice distinctly showed it in his manner: my vesuvians were “flamers.” Still, there he remained, close by, continuing to execute his odd movements and acrobatic tricks at intervals, and not seeming the least inclined to “move on.”

I began to get very tired of being on that wall. I had remained there some hours, and had taken observations of the bull sufficient for all practical purposes. On referring to my watch, I found that dinner-time—half-past six—had long since passed.

The sun began to sink, and inklings of dusk became apparent. I did not know my way back in the dark; and besides, I did not care to walk through a field with a strange animal in it, like this bull, after evening came on. Of course, in the middle of the day it would have been quite a different thing.

At last I made up my mind that I *must* go, and—

“When a big-souled man resolves, he can perform.”

I was determined to get away before dark somehow; but while I was turning the matter over in my mind—suddenly a thought struck me! I got down, *the other side* of the wall, and walked home.

INDIAN POLICE.

IN introducing the Indian policeman to your notice, I may, perhaps, say a few words as to his personal appearance. If you should conjure him up in your imagination as a dark-skinned constable, on the model of frock-coated, helmeted policeman X, you would be very much mistaken; but, though so different in appearance, he has many of the characteristics of his English brother, for even in native States, whose internal economy the British Government does not interfere with, the police

force is, more or less, modelled on the English system.

He is dressed in a loose blue tunic, made of serge, with white trousers; in some places he wears a red turban, in others a blue one. His number is placed in a conspicuous part of his dress—either on the breast of his tunic or his turban; he wears shoes—that is to say, occasionally, for when he is "moving on" from one station to another, or is looking after some one who is "wanted," he carries his shoes in his hand—a most economical mode of proceeding. He has a sword belt, and sometimes wears a sword; but always when on duty carries a staff. He invariably salutes any respectably dressed European that in his idea comes under the description of a sahib, by halting and bringing his staff across his body.

Though there are no areas for him to descend into, as Indian cooks are of the male sex, yet he is generally on speaking terms with most of the ayahs—I mean the good-looking ones—and is often to be seen of an evening pushing along a perambulator, while engaged in sweet converse with the ayah.

If there is any row, and the policeman is in urgent request, just as is the case in our more favoured land, he is nowhere to be found. He seems to have a wonderful faculty of disappearing suddenly, like a rabbit into its warren. Immediately that his presence is no longer required, there he is again, halted and fronted, saluting after the most approved fashion. If he takes any one into custody, it is accomplished in a very deliberate manner, with a great deal of preliminary conversation and gesticulation.

He rarely makes a capture by himself, unless it may be that of an old man or woman; but gets as many as he can to help him. Not unfrequently they are to be seen all squatted down on the ground, the prisoner in the midst, arguing the case over. I once had occasion to give into the custody of two policemen a servant of mine, who had been indulging too freely in the flowing bowl, and was so quarrelsome that he had been knocking down all the other servants within reach. About half an hour afterwards, back they all came, the whole three of them salaaming. On wanting to know the reason of their re-appearance, I was told that it was to see if master would "exsqueege" (excuse) the prisoner; but master would not, and they retired to the lock-up. During my absence

from home in the evening they came again, this time to see if the mistress would "exsqueege" him, and met with the like success. Later on in the evening, I suppose they took it upon themselves to forgive him, as I saw my friend at large. I fancy a little palm oil had something to do with his being at liberty.

As detectives they are much more at home—their Oriental cunning stands them in good stead; and they exhibit an acumen that would not disgrace the most intelligent of our own police force. I will give an instance of this that happened lately. One day a well-dressed woman, apparently of the better class, entered the house of a sowcar or money-lender in Hyderabad. She seemed to be in the most dire distress, and was crying bitterly. She informed the sowcar that her husband was a merchant, and that he had embarked his all in stocking a shop; that the shopkeepers had agreed together to ruin him; that they had succeeded in doing so; and that now he was lying in prison, sunk under a load of debt, at the mercy of his pitiless creditors. The only way of helping him that she could think of was to pawn her jewels, and she had accordingly brought them with her, hoping that the sowcar would advance her such a sum on them as would be sufficient to liberate her husband. She then produced her treasures—diamond rings, earrings, pearl necklaces—apparently worth several thousand rupees, and entreated him to lend her two thousand rupees on them without delay. He accordingly, having first tested the gold settings, and found them of pure gold, judged the jewels to be also genuine, and thought that he might make a good thing out of the transaction. So, after beating her down a hundred rupees, he gave her the money. The woman left the shop and disappeared. The sowcar shortly afterwards happened to show these jewels to a friend who was visiting him, and was advised by him to examine the stones carefully, which as yet he had not done. He had concluded at the time he made the bargain that, as the gold settings were undoubtedly of pure metal, the stones would also be genuine. He acted according to his friend's advice, and then discovered, to his horror, that they were all only clever imitations, worth nothing. There was only the gold, worth about £40, for comfort. He had been swindled cleverly out of fifteen hundred rupees.

The only thing that remained for him to

do was to put the matter into the hands of the police, in the hope of capturing the woman. They advised him to say nothing of his having been cheated, but to give out that his house had been broken into by a band of thieves, that everything had been carried off, among which was a large quantity of jewellery—that belonging to the woman was to be minutely described—and that he should offer a large reward for the discovery of the stolen goods, as, from their having been deposited on pledge, he would be involved in a great loss. This he did, having it cried with beat of tom-tom through all the bazaars.

Two or three days after, a man came to the sowcar, and said that he had been in prison for debt; that his wife had pawned her jewels to get him out; that, since then, his father had died and left him property; and that now he wished to redeem the jewels that had been deposited with him. Of course, the sowcar said he could not produce them, as they had been stolen; but would the man give him time? This was refused, and the full value demanded, less the sum lent and interest. A great deal of haggling was done, in order to allow time for the police to be summoned. On their arrival he was taken into custody.

The next tale I have to tell is not so much to their credit. It happened some time since, and appeared in one of the Indian papers. Whether it is true I know not—at any rate, I think it was never contradicted.

A merchant having disposed of his entire stock at Hyderabad, in the Deccan, was returning to Bombay. Before he could reach the nearest railway station, a long and dreary road of over a hundred and fifty miles had to be traversed, though it was in a much safer state than in previous years. Yet still highway robberies were not altogether of unfrequent occurrence; and so to avoid the appearance of being possessed of any wealth, as well as for the sake of economy, he travelled on foot, poorly dressed, and carrying in a bag concealed about his person 1000 rupees, in notes and coin, the result of his speculation. Late one night he reached a small village, about midway. Hitherto everything had gone well with him, and he had not experienced the slightest molestation; but as this place was so far from any large town, he felt afraid, with the large sum of money in his possession, to trust himself among the villagers, thinking

that he ran too great a risk of being plundered in his sleep.

A happy thought struck him that he would go to the police station; and, having told the jemadar, or head of police, of the money he had, and his fear of losing it, request a night's lodging, where he might rest in peace and safety. This was immediately granted him. The jemadar consented, but frankly confessed to him how glad he would be when he took his departure, as he felt sure he would hardly be able to sleep a wink that night, on account of his deep sense of the responsibility he incurred.

Our friend, the merchant, then entered the station-house, and having put down his bag of rupees by way of a pillow, prepared for a snooze; but the jemadar, who seemed a good sort of fellow, said he could not think of allowing his charge to go supperless to bed: if he would go out and have some food, he, the jemadar, would watch over his money until his return.

To this the merchant demurred, and said that he would wait till his breakfast the next morning: he was very tired, and wanted rest. The jemadar and the constables under him, who had now joined in the conversation, would not hear of this, and were so pressing, that at last he yielded, and went out. On passing by the back of the house, he heard voices as of men in eager discussion. Thinking that he might overhear something that might be of consequence to him, he looked about for some aperture by means of which he might see and overhear all that was going on inside. A light shining through a small hole near the roof pointed out what he required; so, cautiously mounting a heap of stones piled against the side of the house, he peeped in.

The jemadar and several of the constables were in deep conversation, of which he was the subject. It was the old case of listeners never hearing any good of themselves. A constable was saying that he agreed to the taking the rupees; but gave it as his firm opinion that they must kill the man first. This resolution was carried. Several schemes were then mooted as to the best means of doing it. At last the jemadar proposed the following, which was carried nem. con. All the constables, with the exception of himself, should go at once to some little distance off and dig a grave, so that everything might be in readiness,

and that no time might be lost in hiding the body. Then as soon as the traveller had finished his supper, and laid down to rest, that he, the jemadar, should lend him a cloth to cover him, face and all, from the mosquitoes, and should then lie down by his side; that as soon as the merchant was sound asleep, the jemadar should leave him, give a low whistle as a signal that all was ready; that the constables should then steal in, stab the merchant, and having carried him out, bury him.

It may easily be imagined that the feelings of the subject of all this agreeable conversation were not of the most comfortable kind. He would have escaped there and then, but unfortunately he had left the bag of rupees with the intelligent police officer; so that was altogether out of the question. Cunning must be met by cunning, and he had not bought and sold all these years in the bazaars without having had his wits considerably sharpened. So he as quickly as possible had his supper, and returned to the police station. The jemadar politely offered him the use of a spare cloth to cover him, which he gratefully accepted.

On lying down the merchant noticed that the jemadar had been fortifying himself with Dutch courage, and this circumstance he determined to turn to account. He remained awake so long that the jemadar gradually became drowsy himself, and at last dropped off into a sound sleep. No sooner did the merchant see this than he quietly got up, covered the jemadar in the cloth that he had lent him, and, taking his bag of rupees, stole out into the night, giving a low whistle. This was answered, as agreed upon between the jemadar and the constable. They came quickly in, and stabbed not the merchant but their jemadar. They then carried his body, covered up as it was, out, and buried it. After they had done the deed they returned, and finding no jemadar or bag of rupees, were furious at being, as they imagined, so vilely treated.

Two days after, the police inspector came to the village, and ordered the constables to parade in front of him as he sat under the shade of a large tree. He first of all questioned them as to the absence of their jemadar. They knew nothing about him—he must have run away, they said. They were then asked if a merchant with money in his possession had come to the village and placed himself under their protection.

This also they denied; but they began to feel rather uncomfortable at the question being asked. Judge, then, of their horror when, at the call of the inspector, the merchant himself, whom they imagined killed and safely buried, dropped down from a branch of the tree and confronted them. It was a perfect tableau.

That the police are equal to the occasion on emergencies the following tale will tell.

Some short time ago the body of a male child, a month old, was found murdered near a well. The police immediately set to work, and, "from information received," arrested a young married woman, who confessed that, after having had several quarrels with her husband relative to the child, she had put an end to it and her domestic dissensions at one and the same time. Evidence went to show that she had a child about a month previously, and that ever since she had been living on bad terms with her husband. Matters were looking very black, and the woman's conviction seemed certain. The police were triumphant; when it occurred to the magistrate before whom the case was tried to inquire the sex of the child that the woman had had. The civil surgeon declared it to be a girl. Here was a break-down. The police were for a moment at fault; but they were not baffled for long. They admitted their mistake, but corrected it by sending the body of *another* murdered child—this time a girl.

There are dark tales every now and then appearing in the Indian papers of torture used by the police to extort confession from supposed culprits; but as there is generally a shade of doubt as to their truth, I will give them the benefit of it, and refrain from relating them. Altogether, the Indian police are not so bad but that they might be worse: a kind of praise that may be considered rather faint.

DOCTOR MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER."

CHAPTER LIII.

MR. DOBBIE was telegraphed for the same day, and returned to his post with all possible despatch.

"Eh, mon, but this is awfu' wark!" he exclaimed, when I met him at the station,

and explained to him more fully all that had taken place. "The auld wretch! wha'd hae thought it?"

"What had best be done?" I said, when I had made him acquainted with all the details, so far as I knew them, of the terrible affair.

"I am sure I don't know," he replied. "You tell me Mrs. Woodward rushed into Green's house the other morning, about seven o'clock, all wet, and covered with mud; and that in about ten minutes after she was followed by the woman M'Anvil, who tried to drag her away, and would have succeeded in doing so, if Mistress Green had not prevented her."

"Yes, that is the story, exactly as I was told it by the farmer and his wife."

"And they recognized the puir daft body directly?"

"They did."

"And kept her there?"

"Yes."

"Eh, mon, but that was a pity!"

"In one sense, perhaps, it was; but——"

"Weel, weel! it canna be helpit noo; but why did ye let Margery rin away?"

"The sergeant thought that it would be impossible to prove anything against her, and so there was not such good watch kept over her as there would otherwise have been."

"Tut, nonsense!—any way she's gone?"

"Yes; and on the whole, a good riddance."

"Well, well; it 'll be you that 'll have to break it to Mr. Woodward, doctor."

"I?"

"Ay, you."

"No, Mr. Dobbie, I could not do it; it is not my place, it is rather yours."

"I? Thank you for nothing, doctor."

"But, Mr. Dobbie, consider——"

"I'll no do it, doctor, that's flat."

"Very well; I shall not."

"May be the curate will?"

"Yes," I replied, "I think he could manage it better than either of us. Let us go to him at once, and ask him."

Mr. La Touche consented, though not without some persuading, to undertake the painful and delicate task.

"If I am to undertake this very painful duty at all," said Mr. La Touche, "I must be allowed to do it in my own way, and according to the best of my judgment."

Nothing more could be said; and I here

append the account subsequently given to me by the curate, of the manner in which he acquitted himself of his message, and what followed.

My friend and Mr. La Touche had been in the same class in college during Woodward's first connection with the university, previous to his departure for the colonies after his father's death; but there had never been more than a bare speaking acquaintance between them, nor was the intimacy any closer after the appointment of the latter to the curacy of Dumfernaghalee; so that it was not without surprise that Charles heard his visitor announced, and his manner, though perfectly courteous, was constrained, and, so to speak, rather condescending.

"May I request your attention for a few minutes, Mr. Middleton," began the curate, after having taken a chair opposite to him, "upon a matter of the very last importance?"

Charles Woodward was never the man to help out another whom he saw at a loss for a word, and sat silently gazing at the clergyman.

"At the suggestion—I might almost say at the request—of Mr. Dobbie and Doctor Cochrane, I have come here to break—I mean to apprise you of a very painful circumstance which has just come to our joint knowledge. It is of such delicate, unlooked-for—in fact, I may say——"

"Hang it, man, out with it!" interrupted Woodward, coarsely; "and don't keep on hem-ing and ha-ing there, like a schoolboy that has not learned his lesson."

"Thank you," resumed the curate, with a bow—"thank you for rendering my task so much more easy than I had expected. I feared I might wound your susceptibilities—I now see that my alarm was unfounded."

"If you have anything to tell, sir," exclaimed the other, "say it at once. I never suffered any one to lecture me, and shall not now begin."

The curate bowed again.

"I have come from Dumfernaghalee on purpose to inform you that your wife is alive—I mean your first wife, who was supposed to have been drowned. I thought to have broken it to you gently; but you have forced me to be thus abrupt."

Charles staggered like one who had received a violent blow, and leaned against the table for support.

"Can I believe you, La Touche?" he

hissed from between his closed teeth. "Can I believe you?"

The curate bowed his head in token of assent, but remained silent.

Charles shook violently, like one in an ague fit, and leaned more heavily upon the table by the side of which he stood; while his face assumed a ghastly, leaden hue.

"Will you swear it?" he suddenly asked, looking up at the clergyman, who stood opposite to him, at the other side of the table.

"No," replied the curate, "I will not."

"Then it is a lie."

The curate flushed scarlet, but repressed his pardonable indignation, and waited quietly until the poor fellow's passion had somewhat subsided. He then said quietly, but firmly—

"I have not told you a lie. Your wife—Matilda Fernley, Doctor Cochrane informed me, was her maiden name—is alive."

Charles staggered, and would have fallen to the ground, had not the curate caught him, and half carried, half led him to a chair, where he remained for some minutes in a state of semi-unconsciousness, stunned by the awful blow which had so unexpectedly smitten him in the full tide of his prosperity.

Mr. La Touche was meditating how best to break the silence, which was becoming oppressive, when the door opened, and Mrs. Woodward-Middleton entered the library.

The curate afterwards admitted that he had never seen her looking so beautiful as she did on that eventful morning. There was so much of attraction in her slightest movement and most careless glance, that Mr. La Touche's heart bled at the thought of the misery that was fast coming upon her; and through his instrumentality, though by no fault of his.

"Ah, Mr. La Touche," exclaimed the lady, advancing with outstretched hand and smiling face toward the curate, who had stood up on her entrance—"I am very glad to see you; how do you do?"

"Glad to see him!" exclaimed her husband, before the curate had found an answer—"glad to see him, Mary!—perhaps you will not say so when you have heard the news he has come on purpose to tell."

She looked first at one, then at the other, in silent astonishment.

"It has been my most painful duty—" began Mr. La Touche.

"Duty, sir," interrupted Charles, in a

loud voice; "who made it your duty, or any part of your duty, to break up a happy home?"

"My dear Charles, Mr. La Touche, what is the meaning of this?"

"I cannot tell you, Mary—I dare not—it is something worse than our bitterest enemy could have imagined; and yet you must—be—told—"

Here the unhappy man utterly broke down, and once more laying his head on the table, sobbed aloud.

"Charles, dear Charles, what is the meaning of this?" asked the trembling wife.

"That man," he hissed, designating the curate by a look, which, had it had the power, as he who gave it had the will, would have annihilated him on the spot—"that man says—says—my—says Matilda is yet alive."

"And you knew it!" exclaimed Mary Middleton—"you knew it, Charles!"

"No, so help me, Heaven!" he cried, passionately, "I did not—not until he came here and told me, only a few minutes ago. Heaven knows I am not immaculate; but I am not so bad as that."

"How do you know?" asked the trembling woman, turning to the curate; "have you seen her?"

"I saw her," he replied, sorrowfully, "immediately before leaving Dumfernaghalee."

Overcome by her emotions, the beautiful, rich, and gifted daughter of Sir John Middleton fell insensible upon the floor, at the feet of him who was, and yet was not, her husband.

CHAPTER LIV.

AS I have already hinted more than once, a great deal of unpleasantness resulted to me from the animus of the coroner, and the persistency with which he repeated that the priest's death was, in the main, traceable to gross neglect on my part; and the poor law commissioners having taken up his view of the matter, rendered my position as one of their officers so very uncomfortable, that I was forced to send in my resignation to the committee, who accepted it with extreme reluctance, and after twice requesting me to recall my determination.

My own inclinations pointed towards my native land, for which I yearned with earnest longing; but my promise to Emma's parents forbade my thinking of Australia, as they insisted upon holding me to my contract.

I therefore determined to remove to London, where we had friends, and I, more than one inducement.

At this present time we are making active preparations for our departure; and hope, in a few weeks, to be comfortably settled in a quiet neighbourhood, sufficiently near the country to permit of our little ones taking a daily ramble in green fields, and yet near enough the great commercial centre for all necessary purposes.

POSTSCRIPT.

My brother-in-law, Robert, and his wife live, as I have said, in London, and are a most united couple; he is thriving exceedingly as to his worldly affairs, but they have no children, which is a source of grief to both, and they talk of adopting one of ours—we have six; five daughters and a son.

Augusta St. Clair is Augusta St. Clair to this day, in spite of several unexceptionable offers; and, according to appearance, is not likely to change her name.

The vicar has refused promotion more than once; and declares that nothing will tempt him to forsake his people, who one and all look up to him as a father, and love and reverence him, as it falls to the lot of but few parents nowadays to be revered and loved.

Lady Georgina, his wife, still continues to complain of her feeble health, and talks of dying every day; but those who know her ladyship the best are of opinion that she will outlive her husband. Her own opinions are as antiquated and ultra-Toryish as of old; and she often asserts that one of the greatest pleasures in store for her in Heaven will be the privilege of seeing and conversing with the sainted martyr, King Charles the First.

My father-in-law has once more recovered himself in business, and has recently retaken possession of The Grove; where, if he does not keep up as much state, he is apparently much happier than of yore.

Matilda Woodward yet lives, the inmate of a private lunatic asylum; where no expense is spared to make her life as comfortable and happy as the state of her mind will permit.

Her bodily health is excellent, but she does not know one person from another, and the only words she ever speaks are—"Charles, dear, dear Charles;" and these

seem to comfort her, for her eyes sparkle as she pronounces them.

The doctors are of opinion that she will attain to a green old age. Her husband has never seen her, but Mary Middleton has.

She, the heiress and unwedded wife, resides on the Continent, and devotes herself entirely to the education of her son, who is a bright boy, and bears a strong resemblance to his mother; who, in spite of her great sorrow, is almost as beautiful as ever, and might have been married many times, could she have bestowed her hand where she had no heart to give.

As her marriage with Charles was null and void, the nuptial settlements were likewise of no effect; but, by a deed of gift, Mary Middleton settled half her fortune on Charles. He resides chiefly at Cromwell-road, and devotes himself entirely to his Parliamentary duties; and that with such exemplary zeal and success that he has secured the confidence of his party, of which he would certainly some day become the leader, but for the accident of his having taken holy orders.

Mary and he have never met since that sad interview with Mr. La Touche; but little John spends some time every year with his father, who seems to love him—and does, I suppose, as much as he is capable of loving.

THE END.

THE CARTRIDGE PAPERS.

BY AN OLD SOLDIER.

A SOLDIER'S DAY IN HINDOSTAN.

ALL those who had not injured their health with excessive drinking would have good appetites after their field exercise of the morning; and a good breakfast of ration beef or mutton, with ration tea or coffee, was before us. A ball of butter could be bought for a pice, or the thirty-second part of a shilling.

The ration meat served us for breakfast. Bread, tea, sugar, and fuel were supplied in excess of our wants, and the eight prime joints of a bullock could be purchased for twelve annas, or eighteen pence; and so we had meat three times a day. The extra meat and payment for our servants—viz., valet, washerman, groom, barber, and, last but not least, the cook—cost each man nearly four rupees per month, out of fourteen, the monthly pay received by a gunner.

In one verandah there were six tables, one for each gun's crew; and every morning about seventy men sat down to breakfast, the remainder being either on duty, in hospital, married, or in the Cougee-house; and at this meal the field-day was fought over again, and jokes and jeers were banded from one table to another.

"Who spoiled the field-day?" would be asked by some one, in a loud voice, and quickly answered, amidst roars of laughter, by the name of some non-commissioned officer not generally popular.

In the opposite verandah the native servants were busy cleaning belts, breeches, pistols, swords, and spurs, while one had some scores of jack-boots cleaning. Before nine breakfast was over and cleared away; and by ten the opposite verandah would be cleared of the servants, the canteen closed, and the most of the men in barracks, the sun being too powerful for either the bazaar or ball alley.

The barrack-room has now a lively appearance: there is a good library, and some are reading, some tailoring or whip-making, some playing at draughts. Round one table in the verandah is a very lively party, who, with figured tablets and cowrie shells in front of each, are watching with intense excitement the "householder" at the head of the table, who is drawing numbers from a bag. They are playing the game of "house." Some few are asleep. And so passes the time until one o'clock, when the orderly sergeant and corporal come to the centre of the barrack and call the roll, and all answer to their names, unless asleep, when some one else certifies their presence, and the sleepers are not disturbed.

In half an hour the dinner trumpet sounds, and all sit down to beef or mutton, baked or boiled, with puddings or pies, according to the taste of the caterer, who is chosen monthly by the gun's crew, and gives orders to and reigns supreme over the cook and his two assistants during that time.

In the cold season there is sword or gun drill in the afternoon, and then tea with cold meat; after which quoits or rackets, a drive to the bazaar or an excursion to see an old friend in another regiment, or to the canteen, where all are old friends, if you have any cheroots with you.

Some distance on the plain was a large orphan school, called Douay's Bungalow, and

not far from this were two flat slabs of pucca masonry, at about twenty paces distant from each other. If the tale is true as told, they mark the spot where two of the 13th Dragoons fought a duel, and they both fell dead on the spots of ground so marked on the plain.

In winter the evening gun is fired at eight, and in summer at nine o'clock; half an hour after which time all should be in bed. All lights are put out except the public lamps hanging from the roof trees; and now is the time for "scufflers" and "hacklers," men who have been able to procure just enough liquor in the canteen (where only a small quantity is allowed to each man) to make them long for more—generally men from another troop, sometimes from another regiment; for your scuffler goes as far from home as possible. Sometimes he has money, but always acquaintances with whom he will sit down and enter into a hushed conversation. These are the men who generally sleep in the daytime, and are now inclined for conversation—not the less so that it is against orders. They are generally old soldiers, who have many things in common to talk about; and if grog is procurable it is freely given, to be as freely returned on some other occasion.

The hackler does not so well know his customer. You are just perhaps dozing off to sleep, and you start up on your cot. There stands a man with perhaps a shirt in his hands, new, and bought most likely a few hours before in the bazaar on credit. You tell him, somewhat peevishly, that you are not a "bagdader," and direct him to the Big Box, three cots farther down. The canteen is open in the evening from six until gun-fire; where, under some rules—or, to speak more plainly, where the canteen sergeant, for the benefit of himself in particular, and the canteen funds in general, evades the rules—you could get as much liquor as you liked; but generally some restrictions were in force. Most of the men went there to have a social glass; but some were "bagdaders," who went not to drink, but to "bag a bishop," that being the cant term for putting as much liquor as could be got into a bladder, and carrying it home to sell, at four times the cost price, when the canteen was closed.

There was some danger in this, as a sergeant was on duty in the tap-room, and a sentry at the gate, to prevent such irregu-

larities; but the sentry was perhaps, when off duty, a merchant of Bagdad himself; and the ~~non-commissioned~~ officer very naturally left as much of this duty to the sentry as he could, very rarely seeing anything unless it was too barefaced to be concealed, the reason of this being that this offence was always punished by a court-martial; and the severity of the punishment, in this as in other cases, defeated justice. It was also carried on in some instances by married men with large families, who took that method of eking out their incomes; and a very profitable way it was.

If I had sold arrack, I could have accommodated the man who brought the shirt to my bedside; two drams from the canteen, at one anna each, made up with water, and the short measure given in the dark, would have made three drams, costing me threepence, and would have been paid for with a shirt worth four shillings; but if it was a cash transaction, the profits were reduced to about six hundred per cent.; but, with all this, I never knew one who prospered with the money so gotten. Sir Charles Napier, while commander-in-chief, struck an effective blow against this work by a stricter supervision of the Canteen Fund—before his time under the entire control of commanding officers, who, in consequence of the immense profit on the arrack, as sold in the canteen—about one hundred and thirty-five per cent.—had a direct interest in a large consumption.

I have given, I believe, a faithful description of a soldier's day in Bengal some thirty years ago. At that time, the Queen's regiments were always twenty years without being relieved, and were more Indian than the Company's soldiers by a great deal. They had more civilized cook-boys, who all spoke English; our servants could no doubt speak English too, but it was strictly forbidden, and immediate discharge would have followed disobedience; but we were, for all that, always on the best of terms. A shorter term of service for the Queen's regiments, and the wars in the Punjab would have made a vast difference in that service, bringing into the country many fresh regiments.

It was in October, 1843, that rumours of wars began to be heard in the barrack-rooms at Cawnpore, and shortly afterwards a company of foot artillery arrived from Benares, and proceeded towards Bundelkund, fol-

lowed by some bullock batteries, heavy guns, and reserve companies from this station; and about the middle of November another regiment with our two troops of artillery crossed the Jumna after being joined by the 3rd Buffs, two squadrons of the 9th Lancers, and some sappers, the native portion being the 8th and half the 5th Cavalry, one irregular regiment, and several regiments of native infantry, afterwards strengthened by the Bundelkund Legion.

We had halted for some days at a place called Kooch, and were here joined by our commander, having another halt at a place called Duboy, where it was evidently expected that the enemy would beat up our quarters, a strong force being close at hand. We had been waiting for an advance of the Commander-in-Chief from Meerut; and on the morning of the 28th of December, 1843, we moved forward in order of battle, with our baggage in column on our left, and after a march of ten miles, our route lay through a defile, on the other side of which we were to pitch our tents. But it was found to be occupied by the enemy; and it was determined, rather than attack them at a disadvantage, to form our camp a mile on the left, which we did, with no other disturbance than was caused by a large herd of deer, one of which was very cleverly killed by a native cavalryman with his sword.

The next morning we moved off, full of expectation for a long march. It was caused by the detour taken to avoid the pass, and it was past noon when we came near to our encamping ground, owing to the badness of the roads; or, to speak more correctly, owing to the difficulties of the hills and dales, where there were no roads at all. We had frequent halts, the last between two hills, one of which was crowned with a fort of some strength. The sides of the hills were thickly wooded, and an abundance of wild peacocks were strutting about in a fancied security that I thought likely to be fatal to them if we encamped so near. The fort above seemed very quiet; indeed, with the exception of a wild-looking fellow peeping from the walls directly down upon us, no other sign of life was made within. As soon as the halt had caused a cessation of noise, we could hear the rattling echo amongst the hills of a heavy cannonade. This, we found, was a battle being then fought between the right division of the

army of observation—our force being the left division—and the Gwalior army, under General Jacobs.

TABLE TALK.

FROM the *Daily Telegraph* war correspondent we have the following graphic account of the Kroomen:—"Amusing little pictures are to be seen about the deck when all the Kroomen have come on board. Here is a chief, magnificent in a stove-pipe hat and nothing else, smoking a 'long clay,' in the captain's own chair. There stands Gray himself, the brawniest of mortals, with the huge brass medal about his neck which proclaims his services aboard the ship *Victory* of Bristol. A notable man is Gray; and of him, of his strength and fidelity, we have heard many tales during the voyage. Close by, talking with a merchant, is a short Krooman, whose biceps is developed to deformity, and we hear without astonishment that he can lift an ordinary human being with one hand."

THE ACCOUNTS received from the West Coast of some of our allies are not encouraging. Here are a few words about the Kossus, with their chief's helmet:—"They have two chiefs, one elderly, dressed in an old blue gown, and one who bears the insignia of command in the shape of a ju-ju helmet. What a wonderful piece of furniture is this! Its framework is wicker, covered with bullock hide, hair outwards. Four little sheeps' horns are fixed therein. Bands of stamped leather encircle it, and charms dangle from the crown. It has ten long lappets depending, also of stamped leather, but prettily embroidered with cowrie shells. The shape is that of a chimney-pot, the height eighteen inches, and the smell deadly."

WE MANY of us remember the troubles of the English officer who, raising a regiment of irregular cavalry, found, on account of questions of caste, that no man would ride in the second troop in a charge—i.e., behind his fellows. His difficulties were nothing as compared to those of our officers who lead the Houssa troops in the Ashantee war, for these latter have an ugly knack, when led up to the fray, of firing and then running away some fifty yards or so, when they turn and fire again—this time including their

officers, who occupy a pleasant half-way position between friends and foes. Pleasant for the officers; but they have one consolation—the Houssas seldom hit.

BRAVERY IS HIGHLY estimated by our sailors; but that they do not think very highly of the Kossus, the following will show:—"It is amongst these we find the fire-eaters, the war-dancers, the screamers at midnight, the tum-tummers, the sword-practisers, the plagues of the vessel. What a lot of Ashantee heads they will cut off, to be sure, if only all promises are kept! But our sailors forward loudly profess their willingness to eat every decapitated foe."

A DAILY PAPER gives an account of a case of cholera which has occurred in Wapping, and of which a sailor named Maskell died. "According to the statement made by Maskell to the people at the lodging-house, he had been drinking very heavily of all manner of spirituous liquors previous to leaving Rotterdam, and, as a means of recovering from its effects, he had drunk a great quantity of water on board the *Demetrius*. He described the water as being of a 'brown colour,' and unfit to drink." And so he had a violent choleraic attack! The wonder would have been if he had not.

ONE VERY "off" night at a provincial theatre, the sole occupant of the gallery was a youth, who, with hands in pockets and head through iron railings, was looking the picture of woe. After sitting patiently for some time, his pent-up feelings gave way; for, with a voice of the wildest entreaty, he exclaimed to the leader of the band (three)—with whom he was evidently acquainted—"Do play up, Mr. Phitkin—it's so *werry* lonely up here." Phitkin, to his credit be it spoken, played up.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and—unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 310.

December 6, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER LIX.

A RENCONTRE.



"DOES Monsieur Rivière reside here?" said Lady Lawler, nervously.

"Upstairs," said the woman, harshly, and banged the door to on the instant.

The visitor ascended another stage, and here she was more fortunate; for a ragged child came to the door of what in the palmy days of the street had doubtless been the drawing-room, and, upon the same question being put to her, immediately volunteered to show "the lady" the room.

"The lady" shuddered, and gathered her skirts more closely round her, as the ascent of each flight of stairs revealed more misery and squalor. She shrank from the greasy wall, polished by many a year's contact, and then started from the dirty, worm-eaten balustrade, standing trembling, at length, in front of the door which gave admittance to the den where Rivière found shelter.

She dismissed the child with a piece of silver, sending the poor girl wondering away, startled at the amount of treasure that had suddenly fallen to her lot; and then Lady Lawler stood, with clasped hands, listening, and as if held there by some nightmare when she wished to flee. For she felt now that it was impossible to go farther. She dared not face Rivière. What a place was this to

which she had come! And that noise—those footsteps downstairs—were they those of her husband, who had tracked her there?

She would have given anything now to have been at home, and her nervous trepidation increased more and more, till it seemed as if a mist was before her eyes, and, with a faint cry of dread, she clasped with one delicately gloved hand the dirty balustrade, to keep herself from falling.

She could see nothing for the giddiness; but, unable to flee, she stood there trembling as a door opened, an ejaculation fell upon her ear, and the next moment she felt some one take her hand, lead her forward, close a door, and then she was pressed back into a seat.

The sound of a voice roused her; and as the mist seemed to clear away, she saw Rivière standing before her with folded arms.

"Miladi honours me with her presence," he said, bitterly. "To what do I owe this visit?"

Dread, shame, every other feeling fled before the maternal instinct, as Lady Lawler rose and threw herself upon her knees before the Frenchman, catching one of his hands in hers, and looking up in his face, with streaming eyes—

"Oh, Monsieur Rivière!" she exclaimed, passionately, "give me back my boy."

"Does miladi come here thinking that I have her child?" he said, coldly.

"Oh—yes—yes—yes! Give me back my boy, and I will bless you."

"Miladi is mistaken; she is misled by those who hate me. I have not her son."

"No," she cried; "but you have hidden him. You took him to be revenged upon my husband; but, Monsieur Rivière, you were also striking at me. It is next to death to me to suffer as I do. But you will give him back to me."

"I have him not," said the Frenchman, coldly. "I know. The police have been,

and they have watched day by day. You have lost your son—I have lost my wife."

"I know how cruelly my husband behaved to you. He was mad, and blind, and foolish; but I tried all I could to turn him from his folly, and yet you would punish me."

"Woman!" exclaimed Rivière, passionately, and he caught her by the wrist, and gazed at her with glittering eyes, "I have suffered every indignity at his hands—insults, blows. He, the strong, has oppressed me, the weak—calling in the powers of the law to his aid; and, through him, I have been robbed of all that was most dear to me. Not content with this, he heaps insults upon my head. He charges me with stealing his son; and I am made the object of the espionage of your police."

"But you took my boy!" sobbed Lady Lawler.

"If I had taken him—if I had planned to bring him up so that he might prove a curse and disgrace to those who gave him birth—if I should train him up so that this heir to a baronetcy might in a good time become the prey of the hangman, I should only be having my just revenge for all that has been heaped upon me."

"But you will not do all this?" sobbed the poor woman.

"You believe, then, that I have taken him?"

"Oh, yes, yes," exclaimed Lady Lawler, sobbing.

"Who told you this?"

"It was my husband's impression from the first," she sobbed.

"Yes, of course!" said Rivière.

"You uttered such threats," she exclaimed.

"Threats? What were my threats as opposed to his cruelty?"

"But, monsieur, you will give my boy back to his mother's arms, and anything shall be done. Richard shall apologize, shall make you every recompense; shall do everything you wish. If you are—if you want money, you shall have it. Only give me back my boy."

"Stand up, madam," cried Rivière, fiercely. "Will apologies give me back my honour and self-esteem? Will recompenses restore me the years I have lost? Will money make me what I was—a gentleman—from what I am—the coarsest of animals, a liberated prisoner? Will all he has, do you think,

restore me my wife, and make me happy again?"

"Oh, no! oh, no! We have behaved cruelly to you; but you will be magnanimous, and try to forgive. It was not my doing; I could not help it. Do not send me away in despair."

"Do you think the pangs of your despair will be any keener, madam, than mine? But, there, leave me. You have been sent, and the sight of you maddens me once more. I cannot bear it. I have not your boy."

"Do not send me away," she cried, passionately.

"Yes—go; leave me," cried Rivière, excitedly. "Ah! I thought as much!"

The door had been thrown open, and Sir Richard Lawler appeared, to stand petrified with astonishment.

"You here, Adelaide?" he exclaimed, savagely.

"Oh! yes, Richard. Forgive me—I came to seek my—"

She could say no more, but tottered towards her husband, to fall fainting in his arms; while the two men stood glaring at each other, till Rivière spoke, his every word seeming barbed with malignant venom as it sank into the baronet's breast.

"Ah, then," said Rivière, coldly, "it begins to work, does it; and you can tell a little of what it is to suffer, eh? But take her away; go back to your noble mansion, pauvres enfans, and be happy, even as I am in this attic. Go—go at once, while I am calm; for at times my blood rushes into my brain when I think of you and your cowardice, and then I feel as if I could kill."

He drew back, and commenced slowly rolling a cigarette, but never took his eyes from Sir Richard, who, raging, mortified, and humbled to find that his wife had come to hold a clandestine interview with his enemy, now threw open the door, and called in the policeman who had come to form his body-guard upon this his second venture to encounter the Frenchman.

"Ah!" exclaimed the latter, as he glanced from the face he seemed to have been reading as easily as a book. "Ah! then we have here the spy. Good! And the spy will spread it all over London that miladi, the delicate and fair, comes to visit the exile in his misery. It is good: people will talk, and the revenge begins to work well."

"You villain!" gasped Sir Richard, who

was choking with passion. "Speak to me again like that, and I will strike you down."

"Ah, ma foi! you can strike me down no lower than I am," said Rivière, contemptuously, as he lit his cigarette, and began to smoke. "I am beginning to enjoy my revenge. Go, madman, and take away your lady—poor thing!—from this place; the character of it will cling to her like pollution, and no cleansing shall make it pure."

"You'd better bring her slowly down, sir," said the officer; "but will you keep from blows while I fetch a cab?"

"Yes, yes," said Sir Richard, furiously; "only be quick, for this wretch will madden me."

"Ah, don't you take no notice of him—a little forren wasp," said the officer, contemptuously. "All I'm afraid of is your forgetting yourself, and striking of him. Don't—take my advice, Sir Richard," he whispered, "don't. It won't pay here, and you don't want to be in the papers, I know; let alone—"

He did not utter his thoughts in words, but glanced at Lady Lawler.

Sir Richard understood the look, and, with a flood of scandal seeming to come tearing towards him, he turned and carried his wife to the landing.

"Get a cab," he cried, hoarsely, "quick as lightning. I'll bring her slowly down the while."

The officer darted across the room to Rivière, who leaned against the wall smoking calmly, and with a cynical aspect of enjoyment watching the proceedings.

He then whispered a word or two to the Frenchman, but he did not reply more than by a half contemptuous glance. Then the man ran down, and as quickly as possible returned with a cab, into which Lady Lawler, now recovered sufficiently to walk, was placed—a mob of bonnetless women and children crowding round the entrance to see what was going on. Then the officer mounted the box, and, raging and humbled, touched to the very heart, Sir Richard leaned back, fuming and fretting, but refraining from speaking to his wife, as the cab threaded the narrow streets and made for those of better repute, in one of which Sir Richard alighted, gave his arm to the companion of his sufferings, nodded shortly to the officer, who had already received his instructions, and walked slowly away.

CHAPTER LX.

JANE'S EXODUS.

SIR RICHARD was not long before he reminded his lady of his feelings towards the nurse; and the very next day it was the common talk through the house that her ladyship had acted very handsomely to Jane, giving her wages and board-wages, and, as the cook observed, more than she deserved in a handsome present of clothes.

"And I suppose you'll be married then, Jane, and give up service?" said one of the maids, as Jane sat sobbing upon one of her boxes on the morning of departure, dressed, and waiting, as she expressed it, "to be fetched."

"Yes, I s'pose so," said Jane.

"Ah, and I hope you'll never repent of it. But what did they say about the poor little boy?"

"Nothing. Don't ask me," sobbed Jane. "I'm a wicked wretch. Oh, what shall I do? Why did I ever leave the poor little thing?"

"There, there!—don't take on so," said one or two of the maids, administering comfort after their wont; and by the time that the tears were dried, Abram Higgs made his appearance to fetch her boxes.

"There, for goodness gracious sake wipe your eyes, Jane," said the cook, "or you'll be such a figure as never was. You'll drive him quite away. Come and sit on a chair. Why, any one would think as you'd got something in that box as you didn't wish no one to see."

"What!" exclaimed Jane, sharply, and changing colour, "in this box?"

"Yes, in that box."

Jane did not answer, but after a brief greeting with Abram Higgs, she whispered a few words, with the result that he shouldered the box upon which Jane had been seated, and bore it off at once, afterwards fetching two more appertaining to his lady.

"Humph!" ejaculated the cook, "I don't want to be queer; but if Jane hasn't got something she's no business to have, it's strange to me. I should not like to say so, but if that box oughtn't to be searched, I don't know what service is."

The housemaid, to whom this was whispered, acquiesced, and then felt very uncomfortable in her own mind respecting a lace handkerchief which she had found under

one of the drawing-room chairs on the morning after an evening party, and began to consider whether, on the whole, it would not be better to make the said scrap of cambric and lace a present to some one before it was claimed.

Jane's other box was now watched jealously till it disappeared on its way to the cab in which the maid was to depart; but no word was said, and every one followed her to the door in the most cordial manner.

"You'll both come and see us, Mr. Higgs, when you get settled," said Mr. Sellars, the butler, who had treated Abram to a glass of port wine upon this occasion.

"Oh yes, sir, we'll come—sometimes," said Abram, whom all the port wine in the world would not have roused from his sombre mood.

It was evident, the butler said, facetiously, that Mr. Higgs was looking at the serious side of matrimony, and did not much like putting his head into the noose; which he, of course, stoutly denied, and then looked more gloomy than ever.

Lady Lawler had been much averse to parting with Jane, and in her leaving she seemed to be cutting off a connection with the lost little one that was pleasurable as well as painful; but Sir Richard insisted, and in this case his word was law, and Jane went.

"But you will not let me lose sight of you, Jane," said her ladyship at parting. "I am terribly angry with you still; but I should like to see you again."

"I'll be sure and come sometimes, my lady," sobbed Jane; and then she descended to the lower regions, took her departure with Abram Higgs, to stay with a sister of his for the time necessary in putting up banns; after which, without the slightest inclination for saying "No" again, she was taken to a neighbouring church and became Mrs. Higgs.

CHAPTER LXI

BAFFLED.

JANE had not left Grosvenor-square, though, without notice. Sir Richard had given instructions, upon receiving the policeman's suggestion, and the latter gentleman had intended to find out Jane's pursuits for a little time to come, had not an incident occurred which put a stop to his inquisitorial proceedings. A murder was perpetrated, and it was suddenly placed in

the officer's hands to trace the culprit, which he did, and attempted to take him, but was so barbarously treated, that, what with a fractured skull, and contusions enough to have killed most men, the officer spent two months in hospital, and four more at the seaside, before he was able to return to his duty; and then his recollections of Jane, now Mrs. Higgs, were slightly misty.

There was that about the case, though, that had interested him; and, as soon as he returned to his duties, he commenced with taking up the Lawler affairs, as something light and cheerful, to get his hand in once more.

His first step was to trace Rivière. He had left his lodgings, and gone none knew where. Inquiry at the theatre afforded him the information that, five months before, it was closed for a whole quarter, and Rivière had not been back since. That was all he could find out in that direction, except that the big drum thought he had heard the bassoon say as Rivière was going home to France, but wasn't sure, as he didn't say it was Delamaine, the hautboy player, that was going.

His further inquiries also failed in being efficacious. Higgs, the stage carpenter, was thrown out when the Soho closed; and the informant wasn't sure as he didn't get on at Hashley's, or else it was the Surrey, or it might have been the Victory. But, no; stop a minute—he recollected now: it was at the Heagle.

The officer's efforts, though, at every theatre he went to, were fruitless, and as unlucky as his visits to the place where Higgs and his young wife had lodged.

"You see," said the lady there, "we have so many lodgers coming and going, mister, that, so long as they pays their rent, we hardly so much as know their names. Thayatrical people ours is, as sees a deal of change; but I think as the parties you mean sold theirselves up and took a hengagement in the country."

Either the officer had found this case a maze, full of stoppages, or else his illness had blinded his perceptions, for he made no further progress; while a visit to Grosvenor-square, to find the shutters up and the family gone on the Continent, completed his disgust.

"Why, I see how it is," he said. "While I've been ill, they have heard of Rivière

going abroad, and they've gone over the Channel to try and follow him up."

A little more investigation made him perfectly satisfied that his ideas were correct; for he insinuated himself into the good graces of Mr. Sellars, the butler, who was too stout and important a piece of furniture to be removed every time the family went out of town, and from him he learned the flattering information that Sir Richard was thoroughly disgusted with the police, who ought to have found the child at once.

"Of course," said the officer. "Why, sir, millstones and brick walls ought to be nothing to us; and as to to-morrow, why we ought to see right through it, and into the middle of next week, right away."

"Well, I won't say but what Sir Richard is a bit harbitrary," said Mr. Sellars, shaking his important head—"I may say *very* harbitrary—when he sets his mind on a thing."

"Of course, he's gone on finding out things himself, quite fast?"

"Well, no; I don't know as he has, sir."

"The Frenchman been here much since?"

"Not once. I did hear Sir Richard say, when he thought I didn't hear him, as that furren party was gone abroad again. Curious taste for people like ours to know 'em at all; but there, sir, it was her leddyship who was always strong on what one of our servants—a very sarcastic young fellow—calls the horgin-grinding element."

"Ah, indeed!" said the officer, persuasively, by way of oil to the butler's tongue, which was now, under the influence of a glass of wine, running pretty swiftly.

"Yes, sir—foreign artists, with long hair; and Italian chaps, as had never had nothing better to do than play the piano, just as if they weren't womanish enough before. Her leddyship was in her glory when she'd got a lot of that sort about her, making Sir Richard as mad as mad. And nice things have come after it, haven't they? Why, really, sir, I've seen that little Frenchman, Rivière, come here that shabby, that if he'd been my own brother I wouldn't have know'd him."

"Ah! I s'pose not," said the officer; "and about the nurse; how's she?—flourishing?"

"Well, I don't know about that. It strikes me as she's found out the difference between being a pore man's wife and having her legs under a good table, and has got that shabby that she's been ashamed to call. It was a understood thing as we should always be very glad to see her; but she's never showed herself since. I'm sorry, too; for Jane was a gal as had good pynts about her."

"Been afraid, perhaps, about the child; and glad to get off so easy."

"Very likely, sir—very likely. It's that, I dare say, as keeps her away."

"And she's never once turned up, then, hasn't she?"

"Not once, sir; but there, she was like the rest of 'em—in such a tremendous hurry to get married. You know what women are, sir."

"Yes, yes," said the officer; "but there, poor things, I don't think they can help it. It is not in woman to have your quiet thoughtfulness and ways of looking ever so far ahead. I'll be bound to say, sir, as you haven't forgotten that there's such weather as rainy days come into people's lives. You've got a good strong coloured silk umbrella ready to put up, I'll bet, when that time comes, eh?"

"Really, sir, I—" murmured the butler, smiling unctuously.

"Thought as much, sir—thought as much," said the officer. "A yaller one, eh? Nice colour, aint it? Now what do you go in for—shares, stock, or house prop.? The last, eh?"

The butler nodded.

"Right, sir, right; so do I. You have cut all your teeth, that's plain enough. Depend upon it, there's nothing like house prop., except land; and the worst of that is that it pays such poor interest for your money. But here, this won't do. I must be stirring. That's my card. And if you come my way any Sunday afternoon, I shall be very glad. There's always a pipe of tobacco and a drop of Hollands in the cupboard. Of course, a man like me can't come a glass of port like this. Drop in some day, when you have any news; for of course I should be interested to know anything more about matters."

Mr. Sellars promised; but they did not part until, in the most friendly way, his visitor had related his adventure with the murderer, which was listened to with the

greatest of attention, the officer meanwhile warming up with the interest his narrative excited, even going so far as to act portions of the most exciting parts, and ending by allowing the butler to place his finger upon the cracked portion of his head—a piece of condescension and favour which won Mr. Sellars to him for good, and furnished that worthy with a fund of Old Bailey anecdote, that served to thrill his hearers for months to come.

But other business took up this visitor's time as he grew better in health; and though he sometimes wondered to find that the little family romance, as he termed it, should have come to so strange an end, without any elucidation of the mystery, he declared to himself that he could not continue the search without a pretty good certainty of reward. In other words, he owned to himself that the very simplicity of the case baffled him; and there it remained at rest.

CHAPTER LXII.

"POUR LA PATRIE."

"IT is not right; it is not fair," said Monsieur Hippolyte. "I do not fear for my life in a good cause. I will go and hurl a shell when the time comes. I will take my turn to crush that execrable spy Rivière—bah, I spit upon his name! I will suffer imprisonment; but I will not sit and see these foolish risks run for nothing. Doctor, you are mad! Why, even Lemaire there has turned pale, and shivers."

"Lemaire is like you—a coward at heart," said D'Aulnay, who had just calmly struck a match and lit a cigar, which he puffed at regularly, sending great rings of smoke into the room. "There! I told you so. See how he is a coward! He fears to be thought one, and shows his hand."

Lemaire turned a contemptuous glance on the two men as he struck match after match with an assumption of carelessness that sat ill upon his white, damp face.

"Yes, I told you so," said D'Aulnay, tauntingly. "That is well. Throw the lighted powder on the floor, and it will be easy to blow us all up."

He burst into a merry laugh, as he saw Lemaire turn even paler than before, and stoop and snatch up, with trembling hand, an incandescent piece of a lucifer match, placing it carefully in the fireplace.

The laugh seemed to madden Lemaire, who snatched at the box, tore out a dozen

matches, and was about to strike them, out of mere savage bravado, when a sharp click arrested him, and he sank back into his chair, staring hard at his tormentor, who had covered him with the bright blue barrel of a tiny pistol, all the while sitting calmly smoking; his white teeth glistening from the midst of his black beard, as he watched the play of Lemaire's features.

"I have worked too hard, Monsieur Lemaire, my dear friend, to wish to be blown up by my own petard—by my own poudre d'enfer, of which I have a goodly stock close at hand. There is a method in my madness, as that same writer amongst these barbarians has also said. When I use fire here, I do it at discretion, and friend Hippolyte here need not feel alarm. He is honest, and says he has fear; but you—you are not honest. Sit still, or I may be tempted to draw the trigger. You, I say, are not honest; for you are horribly afraid, and still profess bravery. But you are a mean cur, Lemaire. You would betray us all did you dare."

Lemaire made as though he would start from his chair.

"Sit still, fool, or I will fire," said D'Aulnay, calmly, without so much as moving a muscle, merely keeping the tiny pistol in a direct unswerving line with Lemaire's face, till the dew upon his ashy forehead grew heavier, and drop mingled with drop, till by degrees they began to trickle down his face.

"Yes, you are a mean, contemptible coward," continued D'Aulnay. "Patriot! Mon Dieu, there was never a man who was less a lover of his country. You join us. Yes; but for your own ends. You have a chance of being revenged upon Rivière. Of course, for your country? Bah! for your own ends; that you may persecute his wife, hunt her, follow her—till she proves too much for you, and eludes you. Great patriot! Good citizen! You aid our plans, too, about Rivière. He is a spy, eh?"

"Yes, a cowardly, cruel spy," exclaimed Lemaire, furiously.

"Liar," replied D'Aulnay, quietly. "Liar! You told us he was. You urged us to encompass his death, because he was a spy; and we believed in you then, and let ourselves be cajoled. Sit still, do you hear?"

Lemaire had turned in his seat, as if to spring up, writhing at his tormentor's words;

but now he sank back shivering, and paler than ever.

"Yes, liar!" continued D'Aulnay, evidently delighting in his vivisection of the man before him. "And we dogged and persecuted that Rivière nearly to his death. Poor devil! But I am thankful that Hippolyte's arm failed him twice. Not that I mind a few lives if they stand in our way at some critical time—if there is something to be gained for our cause; but this poor fellow, fate-hunted, I am glad was too much for us. He lives yet, Lemaire, for your sake. Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed, softly. "There will be a meeting between you some day, Lemaire; and he will take you by the throat, and ask you what you have done with his wife. I should like to be a looker-on.

"Bah! this is a long speech, mon ami, Lemaire; but I must tell you how I find that you have made a tool of us. Those imbeciles—those aristocrats, too, in that square! You led us on, too, there, with your tale of the visits to Paris. Yes, you led us on, and we must have been very weak to believe; but, you see, we are all weak at times. But it is enough, Lemaire; we know you for the future. And you, what will you do now? Go and tell to the police that we have a plot on hand; that in a short time we shall get passports, and cross with our shells, to explode them in the path of the tyrant who tramples down our country? Eh, you will do this—is it not so?"

Monsieur Hippolyte shrugged his shoulders, but Lemaire merely sat on, pale and glaring.

"That is what you would like to do, eh, mon ami, Lemaire? Yes, that is it; and you would do it at once, only that you dare not—dare not—dare not!"

"Let me see—let me tell you," continued D'Aulnay, after a pause—"let me tell you what you know: that there are thousands joined to our cause, and to a man they would set themselves to find you and make you their mark—eh, Monsieur Lemaire? You did not know our strength until you joined our force.

"Now," he continued, "get up. See, I put away the pistolet. I need not use it, for you will play us no more tricks."

He quietly uncocked the pistol, and placed it in a small pocket in the breast of his coat, and leaned back in his chair, with

his eyes half closed, watching Lemaire, who turned impatiently in his seat from time to time, to sit at last gnawing his nails, at which he bit viciously, glancing furtively from one to the other, till there was a step heard upon the stairs, then a knock, and a letter was thrust through the opening beneath the door.

"News," said D'Aulnay, with glittering eyes. "Good or bad? Let us see."

He crossed the room and took up the letter, opened it eagerly, and then exclaimed—

"News, gentlemen; great news! Immediate action. Mon Dieu! this is indeed great! Now, Monsieur Lemaire, we shall require your services, and directly. You have expressed your willingness before; now you shall act. Do you hear?"

"Hear? Yes, as plainly as I heard your insults," snarled the man addressed. "What am I to do?"

"To do!" exclaimed D'Aulnay. "That which you have so often professed your readiness for—Mourir pour la patrie!"

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

UNBOUND AND BOUND.

DO you remember the books of the bygone—say of forty years ago? What cheerful affairs they were.

But stay a moment: pray do not for a moment imagine that I am referring to the contents of those works, far from it. We all know how the past century held all the sweetness and light—graphic power and literary talent generally; and that now we have but mere scribblers—so our fathers tell us. Therefore, we let them rest. Our reference was to the outsides of books in general—the rich drab paper covers, with a dirty label on their backs, to charm the eye. Certainly, now and then one saw a piece of pretty marbled paper, and some of the old calf and russia bindings were works of art; but the bindings, as a rule!

Do you remember the elegant designs upon the pale piecrust sheep binding, speckled as if the crust had been peppered; the leather book sides ornamented with dabs from a sponge; and those others, over which a fluid had been allowed to meander in a set of streaky streams? Bright books all of them, no doubt, but anything but cheering to the eye.

But, as the French say, we have changed

all that. Enterprise and competition have set our bookbinders to work, and in place of the old "boards" we now have what are technically termed "cases"—those elegantly designed covers that embellish nearly every work we see, from the attractive toy-book and juvenile series right up through novels to the drawing-room editions, resplendent in colours and gold.

Wonders have been worked in this direction of late. The binder who can turn out the best-looking books at the cheapest rate has, of course, found most favour with the publishers, and therefore there has been a battle of enterprise to be that binder. The chemists have helped with their beautiful dyes for the cloth—simple calico—which has been brought to such perfection with gloss, pattern, and watering that it looks handsomer than the silk of old. The designers have been called upon to sketch elaborated patterns upon brass for embossing the books' sides, and the engraver has had his task to chisel, gouge, and file it out ready for the stamper, and all to bind a cheap book, perhaps for Christmas—cheap books really; for the large piles, stacks—mountains almost—of works that are bound up together serve to bring down the price to a sum that would have astonished our grandfathers.

It is rather a warm place, this great binder's "shop" close handy to Fleet-street; and its odour strikes upon the visitor's nostrils in a strange variety of ways. First, we get a symptom of a heavy wash—that's steam; next, a flavour of a bakehouse—that's the furnace; the theatrical taste is the gas; the scent that reminds one of that new Lindley Murray given us at school is damp paper; and the nasal memory of Chips, the carpenter who repaired our gate, is glue.

However, there is no time for stopping to smell when our mission is to see—to observe casually, of course. So we follow a very courteous conductor to a floor where, upon big tables, men are very busy with great rolls of cotton cloth, cutting them up into exactly measured squares, each one just the size for the case of some particular work—one, say, of which the firm has three thousand in hand to bind, and of which in another floor scores of girls are busy folding the sheets, while others collate and arrange and lay them ready for other girls—the sewers, who stitch them together at a great rate to outstretched, upright bands.

But to return to this cloth, for our object is more to note the elegant exteriors of the season's books, taking it for granted that the sheets are sewn up ready for our use, cut of edge, sprinkled, left white, or gilded—may be, as a set-off to the cloth in hand. All the colours of the rainbow are here being unrolled—fine watered *moiré* antique silks, some of these appear; while others seem gorgeously dyed skins of fine morocco or russia leather—till the hand touches the outstretched sheet to find it stiff and crackling, a grand deceiver to the eye, for it is merely cotton cloth.

We proceed to another part of the building, to where men are operating upon piles of light brown millboard—that hard, tough, tightly compressed material, which resembles brown paper in a fossil state. For the book-covers this, and these men are standing before machines, contrived something after the fashion of the old chaff-cutter of our stables. There are contrivances here, though, for registering the exact size required; and the board being pushed up to these, with a single cutting chop the man slices off lengths of millboard, and cuts these again into oblongs the exact size required for the books in hand. The eye would soon tire of watching the speed of the worker's hands; for experience has taught those hands so well that they work as if by magic, piling up squares, or rather oblongs, of millboard, which, like the pieces of cloth we saw before cut up, go to another work-bench to stand side by side before another set of busy workers, each of whom is provided with a kettle of molten glue, worked up into a froth.

With a few rapid manipulations of the gluey brush, a piece of cloth is covered with the adhesive liquid. A few more quick motions, and two pieces of millboard are placed in position, with a plain slip of brown paper between them to form the back. The edges of the cloth are turned over neatly, and rubbed down, adhering closely to the millboard; and so far the "case," as it is termed, is complete. Green the case is now; and if you open any cloth-bound book, holding the letterpress together, and letting the lids of the cover fall on either side, you will see at a glance what we have attempted to describe, and this is going on all around at a rate that is absolutely astonishing.

Our next visit is to the design-room,

where, arranged on shelves and in drawers, are hundreds and hundreds, perhaps thousands of pounds' worth of brass designs, for the ornamentation of book sides and backs. We shall see them in use directly, but it is as well to see first the simple little scraps of engraved brass, each of which has been, or will be, set to work to produce its impression, perhaps several thousand times, upon the cover of a book, either "blind-tooled,"—that is, stamped in the cloth—or embossing gold leaf, to leave the pattern a lustrous glory. The designers have been ingenious—flower, fruit, and leaf *au naturel*, and flower, fruit, and leaf conventional, are here side by side, with set patterns of the stiffest character; but all striking, and showing no mean knowledge of art. The brass is, as a rule, about a quarter or three-eighths of an inch in thickness; and stepping into the next, a very hot and gassy, room, we see how the patterns are used.

There is a regiment of apparently unfinished iron Albion printing presses in the room, the large platen being absent. On looking farther, we see that to each press there are pipes, and having jets of gas fixed so that they heat one of the brass patterns arranged upon a portion of the press, so that by a motion of the hand this part can be brought down with great force upon anything beneath.

At each press stands a man with a heap of unfinished plain cases beside him, and these he places one by one beneath the press, bringing down upon it the hot brass pattern. The case is green—that is, soft with the moist glue—and it receives the impression readily, so that the design of the artist is forced into the cover—almost burnt in; not quite, for too great a heat is carefully avoided, as it would damage the aspect of the case.

We pass from press to press; and though the patterns are various, the books of different size, the system is the same for blind-tooling the cases, which, with their rich embossing, look handsome in the extreme. But this our guide will not grant: they are unfinished, and we are to see what the firm can do in the way of gilding the designs.

Gold is a wonderful metal!

This is a very original observation, let it be noted; though we are ready to grant that there may be those who have found it out for themselves. But, setting aside gold in its monetary sense, it is really wonderful how

thin a film can be laid upon another substance, giving to it the effect of fine gold, as brilliant as if the piece were solid. We are far more economical now than they used to be in bygone days, when monks and others devoted themselves to the illuminating of books. Some of the parchments display bright, glittering layers of gold that age, comparatively speaking, massive in comparison with the film that our book-binders are compelled to handle so gingerly that a breath would send it flying—one of the heaviest metals—like a piece of thistle-down. Here, close at hand, we can see the manipulations of the gold hammered out so thinly by the goldbeater.

Here they are—not the goldbeaters, but the men who use their gold. This man is a fair sample of the rest, and he has before him a pile of "blind" covers; a very neat little calf leather cushion, about ten inches long by six wide—the brown leather has upon it a ruddy tinge, as if it had been rubbed with red chalk. He has also a thin-bladed palette knife, whose edge is smooth and blunt, and a dozen or two of little, dirty, ochre-smear, ruddy books, just a few leaves of some old book sewn up together and cut square. Uninviting little pamphlets these, until a workman takes up one, and dexterously opens it at what should be page one. Not much dexterity needed, it may be, to open a little book. Stop a little, my dear critic, and place yourself in our workman's situation. He has so many of these books counted out to him a day; each book contains so many leaves, and between these leaves are films of gold leaf—each leaf containing so many square inches; and for all those inches he has to account. The loss of a leaf means money out of his not over-rich pocket; hence he acquires dexterity in opening a leaf which your fingers would touch but to send the gold film flying away, or crumple it up beyond recovery.

It is interesting to watch him as he opens the leaf to display the rich, smooth film of refulgent gold, looking the richer for the ruddy paper, chalked to prevent adhesion. Now he takes up his palette knife, gives a gentle pat to the paper, with the effect of making the gold start up sufficiently to allow of his passing the knife blade beneath. This done, he lifts the tender gold gently, bears it over the pad or cushion of leather, and lets it fall upon the surface—all so gently that the delicacy of the strong hands is sur-

prising. But for all that the gold leaf lies crumpled up on the leather. Only for a moment, though. He breathes upon it softly, and it all lies smooth—ready for him to deftly raise his knife, and mark or cut it into eight little square pieces.

What next? Each little square is taken up upon a pad slightly oiled, and then transferred to the blind cover—in this case to the back where the title of the book is to be, and to the centre of the front side, where there is to be a golden ornament. At the next bench, though, the worker is preparing for the embellishment of a gorgeous book, and he literally covers the back and one side of the case with gold.

This constitutes these men's task—namely, to transfer to the parts to be gilded thin films of gold, just large enough to cover the stamp to be applied; and as they perform this task, they diminish the blind heap on one side, and pile up a roughly-gilded heap upon the other, ready for them to be borne off to the stampers, busy by the presses we have seen in use for the blind-tooling—arming presses they are termed; and they perform the work at one motion, with beautiful exactness, either ornamenting or lettering, that used to be done by hand, regularly by the very skilled workman, but indifferently well by those not so true of eye. Here, all is the regularity of the machine; the workman has merely to get by experience the right heat to be attained by his brass ornaments, already secured to a plate at the proper distance one from the other by means of paste and brown paper.

The gold was, as we have seen, adhering to the cover or case in a square patch; and there is sufficient adhesiveness in a newly-glued or "green" cover to ensure the firm fixing of the gold when heat is applied. A heap of loose covers has just been placed by one man's press; and on looking at them we see that they are those richly gilded cases, with side and back completely covered. He takes up one, passes it under the brass ornaments, placing it exactly square, according to certain checks or stays arranged for accuracy; he draws a handle, and the heated machinery is moved by powerful leverage, coming down with slow, steady force upon the cloth-covered millboard, which, on the handle being released, is quickly removed, and another and another rapidly stamped or printed.

Upon taking up a printed cover, there is

the pattern, glistening and bright, while the rest remains gilded but dead. We now see what a waste of gold there is—not one-half having been covered by the pattern. However, our friend at the arming press has nothing to do with that; he merely goes on stamping, watching carefully the while that his brazen ornaments keep sufficiently heated to force in the pattern deep into the cloth without burning.

It is this division of labour that enables binders to furnish handsome book covers at so low a rate, each man keeping on at his own particular branch, and acquiring a dexterity that is almost wonderful in the work it achieves. But to follow our gilded cover.

That gold is valuable need hardly be said, and this waste of leaf has to be counteracted in some way; the gold can be saved though the labour is lost, and it has to be remanufactured—melted, cut up, and beaten once more into leaf. Nearly four pounds sterling per ounce is the value of gold, and those ounces are in troy weight. The gold upon one cover cannot even be calculated as a grain; but then grains go to make pennyweights, and pennyweights soon form an ounce; so these covers go by the thousand to the cleaning-room, where there are table-like bins. The tops are of zinc perforated, and over these zinc plates the cases are brushed and rubbed, when the unstamped gold flies off in a tiny golden snowstorm, shimmering in the gaslight, and falling through the holes in the zinc, ever to increase the heap of gold dust lying below. Every tiny scrap is saved. The men's aprons get tinged with gold, and are burned for their auriferous ashes; so are the brushes and cloths and rubbers. All have in them living, infinitesimal scraps of gold dust which make them valuable. Even the old gold leaf books have their morsels, which make it worth while to save them; and all go to the refiner's for reducing once more to ingots and remanufacture.

It seems a great expenditure of trouble to obtain what at first sight seems so little, but it must be remembered that in the aggregate millions of books are brushed over these tiny holes, half the gold laid on the corners not being utilised.

Gold is so attractive in its yellow, glistening state that we have lingered over it too long. So turn we to the silver films used for decoration—not though to any extent,

for silver has a bad habit of oxidising—turning black and tarnished, spite of every care. Still it is used, and often in combination with colours. Great illuminated letters are stamped upon cloth, perhaps blue, or yellow, or scarlet, upon a subdued cloth—the effect being given by first pasting on a label of parchment paper of the desired colour; this, when stamped, silvered, or gilded, has a most striking effect, but is principally used for gift and juvenile books. Some of the most effective bindings are produced by simple printing: a pale blue cloth cover perhaps is lettered in gold, and maybe displays a golden ornament upon its side; but this is supplemented by printing upon the cover, in glistening black ink, some elegant design, the effect being rich and novel in the extreme. For they are no idlers, these binders; their object is to produce novelty; and though it may sound an Irishism, they often produce novelty by taking from the old—antique binding, for instance, which has been most popular, the principal effect being produced by beveling the boards, this being done by laying them against a sloping edge of iron, when a workman slices slantingly the edge with one stroke of a keen blade.

Passing on amidst a busy hum of workers, by machines of ingenious contrivance, all invented for the saving of labour—this to cut edges like a modern guillotine, that to round backs so as to give them that graceful concavity in front so distinctive of a well-bound book; these again to press them, when bound, into solid, hard, firm books by means of water power, for the hydraulic presses are many—here, then, we stand, where the undressed book awaits its clothing—that, perhaps, meretricious garb which shall attract the eye to the modest beauties within. On one side here lie the books—the sheets folded, sewn, and edges cut; backs glued, rounded, and having secured to them canvas flaps to lie beneath their coloured end leaves. On the other side lie the bright, glistening cloth covers, gilded, finished—only wanting their contents.

The binder who executes this part does it with a few touches. He takes up a cover, places a book carefully within, seeing that it fits at exact distance from the edges, then a sharp application of the paste-brush to one end leaf, and the case is laid upon it to adhere; the book is turned over, the process

repeated upon the other leaf and pressure applied, when the cover is secure.

Now comes drying, and more pressure between boards in a hydraulic press for a certain time, after which the now handsome works are piled up and secured in dozens, scores, or fifties, according to their size, between a couple of boards held secure by rope, and in this stage they are conveyed to the publisher, to burden his shelves or be conveyed wherever the Anglo-Saxon tongue is read.

We have them all here, from the tiniest, meanest-bound school book, up through every variety to the handsome presentation volume, the design for whose cover has perhaps cost a hundred and fifty pounds, and which, heaped here in a perfect stack, shall in the course of a month be in single copies all over England—the new attraction of the drawing-room table.

But enough. The heat here is not pleasant, with its gassy, exhausted odour, and exhaustion made up for, apparently, by ample supplies of gluey, steamy odour. Let us away, for the Casual Observer doth wish to dine. “I beg your pardon?”

“A scrap of gold leaf, sir, adhering to your beard.”

“Don’t name it, pray”—it was a custom in the Roman times; but still the fashion does not rule, so we sweep it off and go.

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER XIII.

“Well she knew the potent practice,
The artillery of the eyes—”

Strife and Tears.

SOME weeks had elapsed since Mrs. Manning’s midnight return to the Hall; and though at first she had rallied, she was now slowly, yet surely sinking, a fact which at once became palpable to all who saw her; though Agnes, as she watched from day to day, strenuously endeavoured to shut out the truth from her heart. During this time Captain Nolan made no sign, either by letter or in person. He sent repeatedly to inquire after Mrs. Manning, but never came himself. Agnes thought, with a ready-made excuse at hand, he would have seized the opportunity of getting what he had so often said he wished for—an unsuspecting tête-à-tête.

It was plain to her he had not yet forgiven the slight of being passed over on the

first of September, and would not now come near the house without an especial invitation. Then again, she was afraid he was angry with her for not keeping her promise of meeting him at Death's Hollow, the day after their moonlight farewell; and, knowing his theory about "ladies' promises," she felt miserable at the idea of his classing her among those "who only make promises for the pleasure of breaking them." She would have sent him by post a little imploring note, but well knew that her handwriting would never pass without detection the scrutinizing inspection of Johnson at the Hall, and the postmistress of the village. And, lately, a new source of discomfiture to her had arisen, in the constant visits of Mr. Græme, who, now Mrs. Manning was ordered to remain upstairs, seemed to think it his especial duty to keep her and Agnes well informed of all the gossip of the county.

Thus, hardly a day passed without his spending at least ten minutes in the invalid's boudoir. It cheered Mrs. Manning to hear news of the neighbours among whom she had lived so many years; and as to Agnes, why, she was always on the qui vive to catch any tidings about Captain Nolan; notwithstanding what she generally gleaned was not altogether of a comforting nature.

Somehow, Mr. Græme seemed often to meet him—but with this qualification, it was always at Islington Court: either they had met there at dinner, or they had been shooting together over Mr. Brownsmith's preserves. But beyond wishing that she had been in the fair Julia's place on those occasions—and in spite of all innuendoes—Agnes did not trouble herself on this score; for had he not often told her his real opinion of all the inhabitants of Islington Court?

Mr. Græme's thoughtful eyes viewed with alarm the pallor that from day to day gradually stole over Agnes's cheeks; and at last, after a great deal of delicate hedging, managed to persuade Mrs. Manning to banish her niece from her room for a few hours every afternoon. On the first day of her newly acquired liberty, Agnes, in an ecstasy of freedom, was waltzing round the hall, when, on suddenly hearing the voice of Mr. Græme calling out something about a walk in the park, her dance became a stampede, as she darted across to the swing door and instantaneously disappeared.

"No, no, no," said she, sitting on the floor of her own room, reflecting, "I have

enough of you in aunt's boudoir. It is Phil's turn now; but the question is, how am I to see him without going near the Red House?"

At the end of half an hour that problem remained still unsolved; and, seemingly, finding the floor unsympathetic, she turned to the dressing table, and, with her head on her hands, knelt before it for inspiration. At the expiration of fifteen minutes, it proving equally obdurate, she raised her head, and started to see that she was face to face with herself in the glass. A month's confinement to the house had cast over her countenance a wan expression, and given to her eyes a long-searching and hungry look.

"Dear, dear, how very insignificant I must appear when compared to Julia! Perhaps he will think so too, if he is angry with me. But how silly to waste my time here, where I know for certain I cannot see him; when, if I am only lucky, I may meet him somewhere by the river; and if not to-day, to-morrow, or the next, or the next; for now I can go every day until I do. Nil desperandum!" continued she, leaving the room with a lighter heart than she had had for many a day of late.

As the door closed on her retreating figure, it said good-bye to the Agnes of its childhood.

Skirting cautiously round by the park wall, Agnes reached the lodge gates without an encounter, and from thence turned to go back to the Hall by the plantation. It was with many misgivings that she set out to return home his side of the river; and when half-way over the bridge, being still in doubt whether to go on or retrace her steps, she stopped, and resting her arms on the low parapet, leant over the bridge; in so doing a small gold locket, which hung from a slender silk cord, slipped from its hiding-place, and for a moment dangled in imminent peril over the turbulent waters below.

"Oh! if I was to lose Phil's locket," cried she, catching, kissing, and replacing it in safe keeping.

Then she remembered that it was from here—the very spot on which she now stood—that he had looked down at her, on the morning of their last happy meeting; and as she thought, an undefined dread swept over her soul, that perhaps now, if she did meet him, he would not be glad to see her. For an instant her heart seemed to cease beating, only the next minute to be set off

at railway speed, as the sound of a firm footstep became distinctly audible approaching the bridge. Agnes neither moved nor spoke. The step hesitated for a moment, came on, and stopping at her side, the voice of Captain Nolan, somewhat constrained on this occasion, said, in an affected casual tone—

"Looking at the rise in the river? We shall have some severe floods if this vile weather continues."

Agnes gasped out a respectable "Yes," in answer, and feeling she must either do or say something, set off over the bridge at a rapid pace. He turned, and began walking by her side in silence, which was soon broken by his saying, bitterly—

"Agnes, you do not seem to understand the definition of the word promise."

"Phil, I am so sorry. If you can spare me five minutes, I can explain all. Say you are not angry with me," said she, raising her large, dark, woe-begone eyes to his, while hope darted into her heart.

Captain Nolan opened his mouth, but never got beyond one word and a half in his reply—

"My dar—" he began, when the rest of the word was effectually decapitated by the rushing of steeds, a sudden jerk, and the voice of Miss Brownsmith breathlessly exclaiming—

"Ah! Captain Nolan and Miss Lane, I thought I recognized you—the two people I wanted to see above all others in the world; and how charming to find you *together!*"

It had happened thus: The fair Julia, when some distance off on the Mugerford-road, saw the meeting on the bridge; and on Captain Nolan's turning back with Agnes, she guessed their destination at once. Knowing well her only chance lay in keeping them apart, she, with whip and reins well handled, gave chase, and just managed to intercept them at the nick of time. A moment's indecision on her part would have lost to her the man she was determined to win, for he had his hand on the gate as she came up. She might well now sit smiling, in her triumphant beauty, at the success of her charge.

Having seen, from the sudden withdrawal of the two addressed from each other, that her speech had gone home, she turned to Agnes, and, in a pretty, distressed voice, said—

"How is dear Mrs. Manning? I am so grieved she has been so ill; but I suppose she must be much better to-day, as you are able to walk so far from the house, dear?"

"She is very ill, and no better, thank you," said Agnes, not relishing the half-mocking, half-patronizing tone of Miss Brownsmith's voice.

Captain Nolan, whose predominant idea was to glide through life quietly and comfortably, listened nervously to the foregone exchange of sentiments; and, to make a diversion, came forward and asked Miss Brownsmith, with great emproisement—

"Why she wanted to see him?"

"Oh!" said she, rising from her seat, and holding out a cream-coloured hand for him to help her out of the carriage, "I am very, very angry with you; and," continued she, giving him a glance, while addressing Agnes, "I hope, dear, you will help me to give him a good scolding."

"I?" said Agnes, looking up with dazed eyes, and wishing to cut short the conversation. "I am sorry, but I cannot stay; I must go home."

"In that case," said the fair Julia—feeling "*aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera*"—"I need not get out of my carriage, for I could not take you both up; but I have room for one. You will trust me to drive you as far as your gates, Captain Nolan?" This with a persuasive look from under her eyelashes.

It is universally acknowledged that possession is nine-tenths of the law, and Miss Brownsmith, being of this same opinion, wisely did not relinquish Captain Nolan's hand, but, keeping it in her possession, accompanied her offer with a delicate pressure from the cream-coloured fingers. Captain Nolan began to waver. He looked at the gloriously beautiful girl before him—for she was so now, the excitement of having to do battle for the man she fancied having lent to her face the spice of animation from the want of which her beauty had hitherto been marred. Then he turned to where Agnes stood—silent, pale, with eyes cast down. She would say nothing if he did not come with her, for she never bothered or made a noise. Besides, Agnes, with Heathfield Hall, had claimed a certain deference; Agnes without, descended to his own level. They were equal now they both had nothing—nothing except, of course, their love.

On the other hand, Miss Brownsmith would make such a fuss if he did not come

with her; and he hated anything like a scene. Besides, a man would be a brute to refuse a girl like her anything; so, returning her pressure, he gallantly replied—

"I cannot refuse the offer of being driven by so fair a charioteer."

She blushing made a feint of giving up the reins, which he stoutly refused, with many protestations—

"Could not think of taking your place—will get in on the other side," concluded he, going round the back of the carriage, thinking by this manœuvre to get an opportunity of giving Agnes a few whispered words, and a farewell shake of the hand; but, though he looked up the road and down the road, she was nowhere to be seen.

When Agnes had said she must go home, she never doubted for a moment that Captain Nolan intended returning with her; and, in expectation of this, stood impatiently waiting for him to bid Miss Brownsmith adieu. Very much startled was she on hearing her proposal; and she raised her face with a look of surprise, that soon changed into one of fear, on seeing him begin to waver, as he stood with his hand in that of the fair, smiling creature before him.

The sight to Agnes was maddening, and just when a wise young lady would have kept her eyes open, she dropped hers to the ground, and, pale and trembling, stood silently awaiting his answer. When it came at last, she at once slipped quietly through the hand-gate, and crouching down behind a holly-bush, lay hid not a stone's throw from him when he was scouring the road for the slightest vestige of her.

With her arms on her knees, and her head on her hands, Agnes stayed in her hiding-place until the last roll of the carriage bearing off her lover and triumphant rival became a thing of the past. Rising from the ground, she came out on to the road, and began retracing her steps. In crossing the bridge she again stopped, and, leaning over the middle arch, drew out his locket, and holding it out over the river, snapped the silken cord, and let it fall into the dark waters below.

"Poor locket, you were anxious to fulfil your destiny. There, go; you will never rise up in judgment of him, for you cannot float. No, I wish you to sink as deep, deep into the dark, shining mud as my

heart is in hopeless misery," said she, watching the last circle and the last bubble fade away of the locket's funeral procession.

On arriving home, she answered several letters of kind inquiry as to her aunt's health, and received two or three sets of callers on the same charitable mission. After which, carefully selecting an envelope and sheet of paper, she wrote off a hurried note to Captain Nolan.

"Oh, dear, what shall I do?" exclaimed she, as a solitary large tear dropped on her signature, turning the capital A into a miniature ink-pond. "It must go as it is," continued she, hastily folding and sealing it up, as she felt her courage fast evaporating.

Then the hideous difficulty of how to get the letter to the Red House presented itself. In her dilemma, she thought of her earliest ally, and at once descended on a tour of discovery to the stables. After looking into all the stalls, and peeping through the chinks of the loose trees, she at length unearthed old John from the saddle-room, where he had been taking his usual afternoon siesta. Delighted to see "the young lady" in his premises again, after an absence of nearly three weeks, he came forward with alacrity, and poured forth his stable hopes and fears.

"Come to see the bay, miss. He is getting nicely over his strain—will be fit for harness in a week or so. I have had some carrots put by for you this long while, miss."

"I am sorry I have not time to feed the horses to-day, John, and I am glad the bay is better; but I wanted—that is—I mean—here is a note for Captain Nolan, and he has sent so often to inquire after Mrs. Manning, I am quite vexed it has not gone."

"I will take it myself, miss, with the biggest of pleasure; and, miss, them horses are getting that rampageous for want of carriage exercise, there will be no holding hoff them soon."

"You will be sure Captain Nolan gets the letter, John."

"You may make sartain sure of that, miss."

"And, John, I will come and see the bay to-morrow morning."

Captain Nolan jumped into the pony carriage, piqued at Agnes's disappearance before he had had time to bid her good-bye. This state of mind exactly suited Miss

Brownsmith, who flattered and fluttered prettily the whole way.

"Poor little Agnes Lane! It's so dreadful to think that she may have to go out as a common governess when her aunt dies," softly cooed forth the fair Julia.

"Here are my gates; thank you for the drive," said he, jumping out of the carriage.

"Oh! you will let me drive you home for some tea? I am all by myself. Papa and mamma are out, and we don't dine until eight," pleaded she.

"I am very sorry, but I have a letter for India which I must finish for this post, or it will miss the mail."

"Then," with tears on her eyelashes, "I shall be obliged to have tea all alone. And," added she, half sobbing, "nobody ever refused having tea with me before. Mr. Neville said he would walk all the way from Muggerford every day in the week for only half a cup of tea, if I would ask him."

"I'll tell you what I will do—go home, finish my letter, and then come down to Islington Court," said Captain Nolan, losing his head, as he always did at the sight of women's tears.

"I shall keep tea for you, so don't be long; and of course you will stop dinner?" said the now smiling Julia, whose tears were of the ready-made-to-order quality—not lasting. She knew better than mar her face with unsophisticated blubbering, which is all very well for little boys, after a recent acquaintance with one Birch; but—

"Young ladies, you should never let
Your angry passions rise;
Your lily hands were never made
To render red your eyes."

Captain Nolan dawdled so long in the fields between the road and his house, that on reaching home he found, to save the post, he had only time to fasten up his letter, rush out, capture his man, and send him off with it at a gallop, amid a shower of objurgations as to time, speed, distance, and expeditiousness. Having seen the last of the grey's heels, he turned into the library for a pipe of consolation before sacrificing himself at the tea table of Miss Brownsmith. He had just settled down comfortably before the fire, with a foot on each hob, the weather being unusually cold for October, when he was disturbed by a knock at the door.

"Oh, hang it! who's bothering now?" thought he, but said "Come in. Ah! is it

only you, Mrs. Timbrel?" he continued, as that ancient woman entered the room with a note in her hand. "Come, not any more tax-gatherers to-day. I am sure, since my return home, I have paid up all my ancestors' arrears for the last hundred years."

"No, sir, it's a note from the Hall, which I was to give into your own hands; and the coachman said as how there was no answer that he had heard tell on."

"Very well; put it down on the table. And, Mrs. Timbrel, I shall not be in for dinner to-night."

The next minute he had cause to regret his order, as, the letter being now out of his reach, he immediately began wondering who it could be from. At length, curiosity getting the better of ease, he walked to the table and took up the letter. As he looked at the address, he guessed its authorship.

"Ah! from Agnes," said he, kissing the seal before breaking it. "An humble confession, I suppose, and begging for a renewal of past favours. Poor little thing!—of course, I shall have to forgive and forget."

As he hastily glanced over the note, his face assumed a darker and darker expression. Turning from the table, he began impatiently pacing the room, while he re-read the letter aloud, as if hardly able to comprehend the meaning of the words, so startled was he at their unexpected nature:—

"DEAR CAPTAIN NOLAN—('She always calls me Phil.')

"This afternoon I became painfully aware of the truth of a rumour which, for the last month, I have heard constantly affirmed, but hitherto did not believe. Not wishing to be a bar to your happiness, I write to offer to break off our engagement, knowing that your sense of honour would not allow you to make the proposal; therefore it only remains for me to do it, and for you to accept, or—otherwise.

"AGNES LANE."

"My sense of honour! Then she can be sarcastic, too. 'Offer to break off our engagement!' Then, by Heaven, I will not disappoint her!" exclaimed he, flinging her letter into the fire.

Taking up a pen, he passionately dashed off a few hurried lines, and again flew out, note in hand, to the stables; forgetting in his anger that he had despatched his servant to the post not half an hour ago. Prañcing up and down the yard, he called in vain, until suddenly remembering his man was

non est, he returned to the house, thrusting into a pocket the ill-fated note. There it remained forgotten till about the same time next day, when it fell out on the floor, as he flung off his coat, preparatory to making an "elaborate toilet," as befitted the heir expectant of Islington Court.

"Now, then, for Julia," thought Captain Nolan, as he rang the bell at Islington Court. "It is a comfort to know that there is one house where I am received as a gentleman, and that there is one girl, and a desperately handsome one too, who is glad to see me. I saw her tears, though she did try to hide them; there is no doubt she is rather fond of me."

"Captain Nolan," announced the now full-fledged James, throwing open the drawing-room door.

The fair Julia, exclaiming, "Oh, I thought you were never coming for tea—you have been so long," sprang from a pile of cushions on the floor, where she had been innocently playing with a family of French cats, and flew to where Captain Nolan stood; who did what any other man would have done on a similar occasion: seeing a pretty girl ready to throw herself into his arms, he let her hide her blushing face on his shoulder.

"My dar—my—my love," at last stammered out he, racking his brains to find an appropriate epithet by which to address her. Naturally, he had begun with the old familiar word of endearment; but somehow it seemed to stick in his throat: it had a strange, antediluvian sound to him now.

"I am so happy," said she, kissing his velvetene jacket.

"Hope she will forget the tea," thought he, printing a kiss on her golden hair.

* * * * *

Inexpressible was the joy that beamed from the countenance of Mr. and Mrs. Brownsmith, when, on entering the drawing-room an hour later, they found their dear daughter sitting on a stool at Captain Nolan's feet, and gazing rapturously into his face. On seeing her parents, she gave a little cry of "Oh, pa!—oh, ma!" and threw herself on her mother's neck, who, as soon as she could with decency hand her over to her other delighted parent, flew at Captain Nolan, and gave him a maternal embrace.

"Heaven aid me!" thought he, struggling to get free from his mother-in-law in futuris.

"My dear, dear captain—I feel as if you were my own child," exclaimed Mrs. Brownsmith, giving him another embrace.

This was more than poor human nature could stand. With a desperate effort he freed himself from the gushing lady, and took refuge on the hearth rug, where he stood looking dangerous, while mentally running over the capabilities of the doors and windows with a view to flight. To be kissed by the daughter was all very well; but by the mother—oh! He must make Julia distinctly understand that her kisses entirely depended on the total abstinence from all demonstrations of affection on the part of her mother. Englishmen do not kiss. They find nothing very attractive in the rubbing together of two moustaches; and, for that same reason, generally avoid the salutes of old women.

At this critical moment Mr. Brownsmith came up, with his daughter on his arm, and seizing hold of his future son-in-law's hand, wrung it painfully for five minutes, while vociferating out unintelligible congratulations. Then, changing his demeanour, he joined their hands together, and solemnly gave them his consent and blessing—Mrs. Brownsmith concluding the ceremony with a sonorous "Amen" just as the door opened and dinner was announced. Catching up his wife's arm, Mr. Brownsmith gallantly led the way to the dining-room, leaving the enamoured Phil to escort his blushing betrothed.

Thus it came to pass that these two became engaged to marry each other, without any proposal having been made or accepted by either of the contracting parties.

THE WISDOM OF OUR ANCESTORS.

GIANTS.

THE Bible mentions several races of giants, as the Rephaims, the Anakims, the Emims, the Zonzonims, and others. Profane historians also mention giants; they gave seven feet of height to Hercules, their first hero, and in our days we have seen men eight feet high. The giant who was shown in Rouen, in 1735, measured eight feet some inches. The emperor Maximin was of that size; Skenkius and Platerus, physicians of the last century, saw several of that stature; and Goropius saw a girl who was ten feet high.

The body of Orestes, according to the

Greeks, was eleven feet and a half; the giant Galbara, brought from Arabia to Rome, under Claudius Cæsar, was near ten feet; and the bones of Secondilla and Pufio, keepers of the gardens of Sallust, were but six inches shorter.

Funnam, a Scotsman, who lived in the time of Eugene the Second, King of Scotland, measured eleven feet and a half; and Jacob le Maire, in his voyage to the Straits of Magellen, reports that, on the 17th of December, 1615, they found at Port Desire several graves covered with stones; and having the curiosity to remove the stones, they discovered human skeletons of ten and eleven feet long.

The Chevalier Scory, in his voyage to the Peak of Teneriffe, says that they found, in one of the sepulchral caverns of that mountain, the head of a Gaunche, which had eighty teeth, and that the body was not less than fifteen feet long.

The giant Ferragus, slain by Orlando, nephew of Charlemain, was eighteen feet high.

Rioland, a celebrated anatomist, who wrote in 1614, says that, some years before, there was to be seen in the suburbs of St. Germain the tomb of the giant Isoret, who was twenty feet high.

In Rouen, in 1509, in digging in the ditches near the Dominicans, they found a stone tomb containing a skeleton, whose skull held a bushel of corn, and whose shin-bone reached up to the girdle of the tallest man there, being about four feet long, and consequently the body must have been seventeen or eighteen feet high. Upon the tomb was a plate of copper, whereon was engraved, "In this tomb lies the noble and puissant Lord, the Chevalier Ricon de Vallemont, and his bones." Platerus, a famous physician, declares that he saw at Lucerne, the true human bones of a subject, which must have been at least nineteen feet high.

Valence in Dauphiné boasts of possessing the bones of the giant Bucart, tyrant of the Vivarais, who was slain by an arrow by the Count de Cabillon, his vassal. The Dominicans had a part of the shin-bone, with the articulation of the knee, and his figure painted in fresco, with an inscription, showing that this giant was twenty-two feet and a half high, and that his bones were found in 1705, near the banks of the Morderi, a little river at the foot of the mountain

of Crussol, upon which, tradition says, the giant dwelt.

January 11th, 1613, some masons digging near the ruins of a castle in Dauphiné, in a field which, by tradition, had long been called the Giant's Field, at the depth of eighteen feet, discovered a brick tomb, thirty feet long, twelve feet wide, and eight feet high; on which was a grey stone, with the words *Theutobochus Rex* cut thereon. When the tomb was opened, they found a human skeleton entire; twenty-five feet and a half long, ten feet wide across the shoulders, and five feet deep from the breast-bone to the back. His teeth were about the size each of an ox's foot, and shin-bone measured four feet.

Near Mezarino, in Sicily, in 1516, was found a giant, thirty feet high; his head was the size of a hogshead, and each of his teeth weighed five ounces.

Near Palermo, in the valley of Mazara, in Sicily, a skeleton of a giant, thirty feet long, was found in the year 1548; and another of thirty-three feet high, in 1550; and many curious persons have preserved several of these gigantic bones.

The Athenians found, near their city, two famous skeletons, one of thirty-four, and the other of thirty-six feet high.

At Totu, in Bohemia, in 758, was found a skeleton, the head of which could scarce be encompassed by the arms of two men together; and whose legs, which they still keep in the castle of that city, were twenty-six feet long.

The skull of the giant found in Macedonia, September, 1691, held 210 lbs. of corn.

The celebrated Sir Hans Sloane, who treated this matter very learnedly, does not doubt these facts, but thinks the bones were those of elephants, whales, or other enormous animals.

Elephants' bones may be shown for those of giants, but they can never impose on connoisseurs.

Whales, which, by their immense bulk, are more proper to be substituted for the largest giants, have neither arms nor legs; and the head of that animal has not the least resemblance to that of a man. If it be true, therefore, that a great number of the gigantic bones which we have mentioned have been seen by anatomists, and have by them been reputed real human bones, the existence of giants is proved.

HOW I WAS SOLD.

CHAPTER I.

"WAITER," said I, addressing one of the coloured "helps" at the Jefferson Hotel, at Lewiston, Ontario Co., New York, "have you such a thing as a book of fares on board the Lake Ontario steam-boats?"

The waiter brought me the book I inquired for—one of those intricate compilations of names, dates, figures, and fractions which it is almost impossible for any save the perfectly initiated to make head or tail of. It was as great a mystery to me as is Bradshaw's or any other railway guide.

"Hem!" I exclaimed, after studying it for some time to no purpose. "Hem! waiter! Can you tell me whether any steamboat will start from Lewiston to-day, to proceed down the lake?"

"Dere was one gone yesterday, sar," replied the waiter.

"Yesterday is not to-day, my good fellow," said I. "I asked you whether a boat will leave Lewiston to-day?"

"For sure, sar, dere one go to-morrer mornin'," answered the negro. "De berry bess boat on de lake, sar, and de bess cap'en too. Cap'en Baldwin, sar, of de *Gin'ral Cass*—de new boat, dat go make him fust trip. You nebber sorry, s'pose you sail wid Cap'en Baldwin, sar."

"And the fare. What is the fare?"

"Down de ribber, sar, to Montreal?"

"No, no. Only to the head of the lake—to Picton, Prince Edward?"

"Don't know him, sar—Picton. But de fare is four dollars, I b'lieve. All de same, sar, s'pose you go to any part of the lake shore."

"Very well. If no boat will start to-day, I suppose I must wait, and go in the *General Cass* to-morrow."

"Can't do no better dan dat, sar," said the waiter, as he was leaving the room.

I had been travelling in the Far West for a couple of months; had then paid a visit, for the third time, to Niagara, and was going to wind up my long holiday by spending a few weeks with an old friend who had lately purchased a large farm near Picton, Prince Edward Co. I had been, however, a little more extravagant than I had anticipated, and was running short of money. In fact, I doubted whether, after I had paid my bill

at the hotel, I should have money enough left to carry me to Picton.

I could have written to Montreal—there was no telegraph between the United States and Canada at this period—and could have obtained a remittance in three or four days; but it was now Thursday, and I had promised to be at Picton by Saturday evening at the latest, to meet a brother of my friend's, who, with his newly wedded wife, was to set out for New York on Monday morning, en route to England. I knew that I could borrow what money I required at Picton; and I could just as easily write for a remittance from thence as from Lewiston, and I should thus avoid the unpleasantness of remaining at an hotel without money.

I therefore asked for my bill, which was promptly presented by the landlord himself. I truly believe that landlords possess some intuitive means of discovering when a guest is running short of money; and I fancied that the look my host gave me when he laid the account upon the table seemed to say—

"See, there's your bill, sir; and, look you, I'll stand no excuses. I mean to be paid."

"Eighteen dollars, twenty-five cents!" I murmured, after having cast up the various items, and glanced at the sum total.

"And very moderate charges, sir," commenced mine host.

"Very moderate indeed," said I, interrupting his intended angry expostulation; "very moderate considering the excellent fare and comfortable accommodation."

At the same time I drew forth my pocket-book.

The landlord was all smiles in a moment.

"I am proud to hear you say so," he replied. "Some gentlemen are never satisfied, let us do what we may to please them."

There is one advantage to be derived by the impecunious from the American paper currency. It is impossible to tell the real value of an ordinary American bank bill—I don't allude to the Government paper—without looking at the figures. The backs present the same generally soiled, dirty, crumpled appearance. If a stranger sees only the back of a bank bill, or sees it in a roll, he cannot say whether it is a single dollar bill, or of the denomination of a thousand dollars. Thus, a twenty-dollar bill changed into single dollars will make a pretty bulky roll of money in a man's pocket-book.

My funds were reduced to twenty-seven

dollars. I had two tens, and seven single dollar bills.

The two tens I handed to the landlord.

"Please to give the change to the chambermaid," I said, carelessly. "I will give the other servants something for their trouble myself."

The landlord bowed, and quitted the room, in the belief, I have no doubt, that I still had a respectable sum of money in my pocket-book.

I gave the waiter a dollar, and the porter and boots a dollar between them. A guest well provided with money would have considered a single dollar divided between the three a sufficiently liberal gratuity; but most people in my position strive to enact the grand seigneur to the last. It is so distressing and annoying to be thought poor by servants. My bill, at my request, had been made out to cover the cost of my supper and bed that night, and my breakfast in the morning; so that when I was ready to depart, after breakfast, I had just five dollars in my pocket. As I was leaving, the landlord came to bid me good-bye. I believe he had expected to meet with excuses when he presented his account, and consequently he felt greater satisfaction than had otherwise been the case at having been so promptly paid.

"I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you again, sir," he said; "and I hope also that you will be pleased to recommend the Jefferson to any of your friends who may be coming this way?"

Of course, I promised that I would do so.

"You go on to Picton, sir, I understand?" he continued.

"Yes," said I, "on board the *General Cass*."

"A new boat, sir, and a real handsome one; and Captain Baldwin is the most popular captain on the lake. I wish you a pleasant passage. Stay, one moment, sir," he cried, as I was leaving. "Dear me, I was almost forgetting, and I should have been very vexed."

He went into the bar, and presently returned with a card of the hotel.

"There, sir," he said, as he handed me the card, with a knowing wink; "you show that card when you get on board. You'll be none the worse for so doing."

I took the card, and supposing that he was merely boasting of his influence with the captain of the steamboat, put it in my

pocket without looking at it, and speedily forgot all about it.

"What is the fare to Picton, Prince Edward?" I inquired, when I arrived at the wharf, of a man who was seated in a sort of sentry box alongside the steamboat.

The clerk looked at me strangely, as I thought or fancied; and supposing that he likewise suspected me to be short of money, I at once fired up.

"Why do you not answer my question, sir?" I said. "I should not have asked it unless I were prepared to pay the fare."

"I don't suppose you would, sir," replied the clerk. "I only hesitated because—"

"Will you, or will you not, answer my question," I cried, "and let me know the amount of the fare? I have come from the Jefferson Hotel, where I have been stopping for some days past, and I—"

"The *regular* fare is four dollars, sir," interrupted the clerk; "but you, no doubt, have a card; or, if you have come from the Jefferson, you—"

"There is the amount of the fare, sir," said I, placing the money on the ledge, inside the square pigeon-hole in front of the man. "As to my card, what business is it of yours whether I have or have not a card?"

And, without waiting for a reply, I walked angrily away.

"Please, massa, I bring down your valise, sar," said a little negro boy, who had followed me with my carpet bag from the hotel, tugging at his woolly locks as he spoke.

I had just one dollar remaining. This I changed at an hotel near the wharf, paying twelve cents for a glass of wine; and, after giving a quarter dollar to the boy, my funds in actual possession were reduced to sixty-three cents.

However, the boat was to start at ten o'clock a.m. I calculated upon arriving at Picton early in the evening, consequently I required no state-room or sleeping berth; and, as I had not money enough to pay the high price usually demanded for meals on board the steamboats, I expended the greater portion of my remaining funds in the purchase of biscuits to satisfy the cravings of appetite during the time I should be upon the water, and also bought three or four cigars to smoke and help to while away the time.

Instead of leaving the wharf at ten o'clock, however, the boat was detained until near noon, thus rendering it probable that she would not reach Picton much before midnight.

At length we did make a start, and I ascended to the promenade deck, where most of the passengers had already congregated to watch the shore as it appeared to recede from us, as we steamed swiftly away from the wharf.

The *General Cass* was certainly a beautiful boat to look upon. Her promenade deck, as white as snow, was abundantly provided with comfortable seats and settees for those who wished to lounge and chat, or smoke. Her state-rooms were large, and handsomely fitted up, and her spacious saloon was really elegantly furnished. Its deck was covered with a rich Turkey carpet. Chandeliers were suspended from its arched and fretted roof; mirrors adorned its sides, reflecting every part of it, and causing it to appear twice or thrice its actual extent. There were whist, and loo, and billiard tables, and tables of every variety; and the saloon was profusely provided with sofas, lounges, easy chairs, vis-à-vis ottomans, and seats of various descriptions.

The lower cabin also was equally well fitted up with every accommodation; and look where we would, on deck or below, everything was as bright, and neat, and trim as possible. The passengers, too, seemed to be bent upon enjoyment. They all appeared to be people who were well-to-do in the world, and nearly all were in their smartest attire. I, in my soiled travelling costume, looked, or at least felt, like a scarecrow among them; but it is the custom in America for people to dress in their best when travelling—therefore this general smartness of attire did not astonish me. I was more surprised not to perceive a single poor-looking individual, male or female, amongst them all.

All went on well until about five o'clock in the afternoon, when the paddles were suddenly reversed, and, after considerable delay, were made to move—now a few turns forward, now a few turns backward—until at length we ran alongside a small wharf on the northern shore of the lake, near which were two or three cottages and farmhouses, and a small public-house, but no town or village of any description.

"Where are we now?" I inquired of one

of the passengers, who was looking over the side near where I stood.

"Waal now, mister, I can't ersactly say," was the reply, as the speaker changed the huge quid of tobacco he was chewing from his right to his left cheek. "We're somewhere nigh Pickering, I reckon, though. Pickering ar'n't much of a place, but this here place is nowhur."

"Shall we remain here long?" I asked, seeing that the men were putting out warps, as if to fasten the boat to the posts on the wharf.

"Waal now, I guess we sha'n't start from here much before daylight in the mornin'."

"Before daylight in the morning!" I exclaimed. "In the name of wonder, what are we stopping at such a place as this for?"

"Waal now, mister, I reckon some of the engine work hev bruk down. That wor to be expected in a new boat, that wor. I don't think nawthin' strange o' that."

The speaker was a tall, lanky, sharp-faced, elderly man, ungainly in his aspect, and having the appearance of a shrewd, well-to-do Western farmer. I was looking about for some more conversable being, when—bang—bang—bang went the gong, borne by a grinning negro waiter, who was thumping it with all his might as he passed along the deck, evidently delighted with the noise he was making, which was loud enough to split the tympanum of one's ears.

"Supper, ladies an' genelman—supper, supper!" he yelled forth, at intervals. And from the saloon, from the state-rooms, the promenade deck, the hurricane deck, the steward's room, from every part of the boat rushed the passengers, apparently as eager to get below as if they were starving, or as if they feared that the tables would be cleared before they could satisfy the cravings of appetite.

Yet all this hurry was of no avail.

"Gentlemen will please wait till the ladies are seated," bawled out an authoritative voice; and the gentlemen, promptly obedient to the request, stood, cooped up in a crowd, at the entrance of the lower cabin, while the ladies, escorted by the captain, leisurely passed down into the cabin and selected their seats at the table.

"Ladies is seated, gentlemen!" presently shouted one of the waiters.

The cordon was withdrawn, and pushing and crushing, higgledy-piggledy, almost tum-

bling over one another in their haste to descend the stairs, yet laughing and joking, and preserving the utmost good-humour, the gentlemen passed into the cabin, and shortly the clatter of knives and forks on plates, and the frequent calls of hungry passengers upon the waiters, became distinctly audible.

I still stood on the promenade deck, looking over the side of the boat towards the shore, stealthily mumbling a biscuit the meanwhile.

"Please, sar, you don't take no supper?" said a voice close to my ear.

I turned my head and saw one of the negro waiters.

"Supper on de table, sar," he added; "you no hear de gong?"

"I rather think I did," I replied. "I don't wish for any supper."

The fellow stared, but made no reply; and I was again left alone on the deck.

"Shameful!" I thought to myself. "It's a mere Yankee trick, this stopping here all night. The object is to put money into the company's pockets, by compelling the passengers to pay half a dollar or seventy-five cents a piece for their meals. They'll get no half dollars from me. No, not if my pockets were full of money."

I felt some satisfaction, notwithstanding my vexation, at the idea of disappointing the company by declining to pay for the meals they, in a manner, compelled the passengers to partake of; though this revenge was in reality about as feeble as that which an offended newspaper reader takes upon an editor, when he writes—

"SIR—For the future I decline to subscribe to your paper."

In half an hour the passengers reappeared. Some went for a stroll on shore; some walked to and fro upon the after-promenade deck; some seated themselves to enjoy their cigars; while others formed card parties in the saloon, or played billiards, or lounged on the sofas and read the newspapers which were scattered profusely over the centre tables. All appeared to have resigned themselves with perfect good humour and content to remain at the wharf all night. I heard no complaints whatever; and one or two to whom I complained of the delay, evidently regarded me as a morose, ill-tempered fellow, who had no business on board the boat.

It is a marked peculiarity in Americans that, eager as they are upon ordinary occasions to be stirring, they submit with wonderful patience and resignation to any inevitable delay, when travelling in the cars or on board the steamboat. I have remarked this peculiarity on more than one occasion, when passengers have been "snowed up" in the railway cars, while travelling in the winter. On such occasions, when the few English passengers have been fuming with impatience and grumbling at the delay, and threatening to write to the newspapers, and bring an action for damages for loss of time against the company, and making themselves as uncomfortable as possible, the Americans—male and female—have sat as quiet and composed as though they were in their own dwellings, and have striven to make the best of a bad job.

Never, however, had I seen this spirit of resignation more perfectly carried out than on the present occasion. Indeed, so far from complaining of the delay, the passengers, one and all, seemed to regard it as a likely casualty of the trip, and one that was rather agreeable to them than otherwise.

About ten o'clock—when, according to my original calculation, I ought to have arrived at my destination, and to have been enjoying the hospitalities of my expectant friends, instead of being, in reality, scarcely twenty miles from my point of departure, and nearly, if not quite, as far distant from Picton as I was when I embarked at Lewiston—one of the waiters made his appearance, ringing a bell this time instead of beating a gong, and shouting out, as he passed along the decks, and through the saloon—

"Any ladies or genelman wish, 'fore dey retire, for take a glass ob wine, or brandy an' water, an' lilly someting to eat, please step below."

There was almost as general, though a little more decorous, a stampede into the lower cabin as there had been when supper was announced, and again I was left the sole occupant of the upper deck.

The waiter came forth from the saloon, still ringing his bell, as if delighted with the noise, and peering about him in the darkness, to see whether he had beaten up all the passengers. Presently he caught sight of me.

"Genelman please not go below, take

little 'freshment 'fore him retire, sar?" he said, coming towards me.

"No," I replied, "I want nothing—I never take anything after supper;" which was not a perfectly truthful statement on my part. Besides, I had really taken no supper, unless the consumption of a captain's biscuit may be so termed.

TABLE TALK.

BY the Queen's special permission, Messrs. Howell and James had the honour of submitting the original drawing for her Majesty's inspection at Balmoral of the Casket presented by the Corporation with the freedom of the City of London to Sir Albert David Sassoon, C.S.I. The illuminated scroll containing the freedom of the City is enclosed in a Casket designed in the Renaissance style of art, and executed in solid 18-carat gold. The centre panel contains an ornamental shield, with the arms of Sir Albert Sassoon enamelled in true heraldic colours, suspended from which is a perfect model of the Badge of the Star of India, of which order Sir Albert is a Companion. The body of the Casket is supported by four ornamental columns, relieved by panels in repoussé and carved gold, each end enclosing a medallion finely painted in enamel with crest and monogram; the lid is dome-shaped, and surmounted by the arms of the City in gold and enamel. On the reverse side of the Casket is a shield containing the following inscription:—"Presented by the Corporation with the freedom of the City of London to Sir Albert David Sassoon, C.S.I., November 6, 1873."

WHO CAN SAY that we are not improving in taste, when a City inn and luncheon bar, henceforth to be called "Magog's," has thus been decorated by Mr. Alexander Gibbs, celebrated for his ecclesiastical ornamentation in stained glass:—"The interior is treated in panels behind the bar; six of these bear in medallions the portraits of Chaucer, Spenser, Ben Jonson, Shakspeare, Milton, and Addison. Above and below are ornamental foliage, garlands of fruit, birds, &c., handsomely painted in rich colours, the busts being on a gold ground. To the left of the counting-house is a full-length portrait of Sir William Walworth, in armour, bearing the typical City dagger; these are surmounted on either side with two large

paintings representing the beginning of the Wars of the Roses, the subject being the scene in the Temple Gardens, where Somerset and Plantagenet, mutually defying each other, choose each a rose as a cognizance for their followers. The other painting is the death of the great King-maker, the Earl of Warwick, at the battle of Barnet; the Earl, bestriding the body of his brother, Earl Montague, has his back to an oak tree, and has plainly received his death wound. These two paintings are a handsome addition to the decorations. Underneath these, and running more or less all round the bar, is a comically designed dado, on painted encaustic tiles, representing the antics, loves, gambols, &c., of birds, mice, frogs, lizards, &c. The birds especially appear gifted with inordinate appetites, and to take especial delight in certain apoplectic frogs, lizards, &c. The remaining walls are appropriately coloured in tints, brown and pink, relieved with gold fillets." As Mark Twain, who is about landing, would say—"I reckon that's smart."

"A MEETING of chemists and druggists has been held at the offices of the National Chamber of Trade, when resolutions were passed characterizing as harsh and unfair the recent conviction . . . for selling citrate of magnesia alleged to have been adulterated, and asking Parliament to repeal that portion of the Adulteration Act which relates to drugs and chemicals." What would the chemists—druggists, we mean—ask for next? Nothing can really be more insolent than this determination to ask permission to sell adulterated drugs and chemicals. The thing is monstrous. We can manage to live on while eating adulterated food, and to keep out the cold with shoddified clothes; but, when we are sick and ask for medicine's aid, in the name of justice surely we deserve to have, or ought to have, pure drugs! Speaking from our own experience, we can say that a prescription made up at the ordinary chemist's means one thing, and that made up at Apothecaries' Hall another. Ugh! As if physic were not nasty enough*that it must suffer from the adulterator's art.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

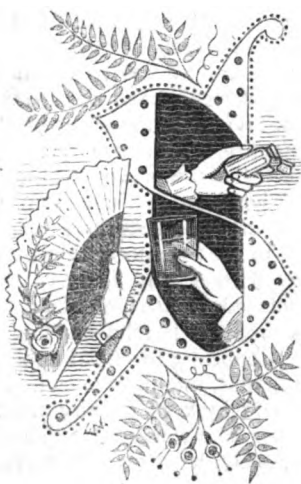
No. 311.

December 13, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER LXIII.
IN THE TUILERIES.



SIR RICHARD and Lady Lawler felt specially attracted just now to Paris. They were haunted by a feeling that the elucidation of the mystery of their loss must come

from there. By careful inquiry, Sir Richard had at last come to the conclusion that Rivière had returned to his own country; therefore, he determined to follow him, and for month after month they led an uneventful existence in one of the Palais Royale hotels.

"Qu'ils sont tristes, ces Anglais," the Parisians used to say of them with the customary shrug, for the Lawlers seemed to lead an aimless existence. When they first took up their abode in Paris, Monsieur Landelles, their landlord, would morning after morning ascend with smiles to their suite of rooms, bearing newspapers and programmes of entertainments, guide books to particular buildings; but they were always received in so chilling a way that the good man shrugged his shoulders to his ears, went downstairs the image of despair, and communicated to his fat, frizzly-haired, dark-eyebrowed spouse his certain assur-

ances that the English milord and the English miladi were suffering frightfully from the spleen, and had come over to Paris to be cured.

"Poor infants!" he said, pathetically; "but they have lived amidst those winter fogs till they have no spirit left. We must watch them, Celestine, or they will—"

Here he gave another significant shrug, and raised his hands to the level of his ears, bending them downward from the wrists.

"Then they must have no charcoal," said Celestine, decisively.

"Bah! charcoal! These islanders with the spleen never do that, my child. They are not refined: they do hang themselves behind the door. My faith, they know no better. These must be watched."

But as time passed on, and neither Sir Richard nor Lady Lawler was found suspended to a big brass-headed nail or peg behind their bed-room door, Monsieur Landelles, proprietor of that grand hotel of Great Britain and beautiful France, gained more confidence in his regularly paying English visitors; but he remained convinced that they were suffering terribly from the spleen.

It was a strange life, that of the Lawlers, passed for the most part in the streets, not riding save in returning from a long excursion, when a fiacre would be called, and they returned to their hotel. Their habit was, breakfast ended, to start off directly after reading and replying to their letters, and walk from street to street.

"We shall find him sooner or later," Lady Lawler had said, alluding to Rivière, "and some day he will relent and forgive us."

They had placed themselves in communication with the police, but there had been no result. The man described could not have returned to Paris: the passport system was too perfect to have been eluded.

This declaration only made Sir Richard

Lawler more stubborn in his own impressions. The very fact of the police declaring this seemed to prove to him, he knew not why, that Rivière was in Paris, and with his child.

So they stayed on month after month, each day making an excursion into one of the less-known quarters, but always without success.

At length, one sunny afternoon, they strolled into the Tuileries Gardens in a listless fashion, to turn though, as soon as possible, into one of the more secluded parts; for the sight of the merry groups of children in charge of the neat, white-capped bonnes sent a pang of agony through Lady Lawler, the spasm contracting her face; and she turned her sad, wistful eyes upon her husband.

"Oh, Dick!" she whispered, "pray come away. It seems so hard."

He led her gently away, looking down the while upon her worn features; and, as he pressed her arm more closely to his side, he felt how, in spite of the restless whirl of fashionable life, the mother's heart had been there; and in the midst of his grief he felt almost thankful for the burden placed upon their shoulders, since it had drawn them closer together than they had ever been before.

"It will be our turn some day, Addy," he whispered. "Our boy is alive, I am sure; and, after all our misunderstandings with him, Rivière is a gentleman, and I cannot believe but that he will repent of all this, and bring the little fellow back some day."

People do not believe in coincidences in stories. Things happen a little out of the common line, and they say such a meeting would be impossible. Softly: turn back a few pages of your own humdrum life, and see how strangely things have come to pass, perhaps with long intervals between, but still with what a fatality! Recollect how you encountered A. in the very place where you had gone to avoid him. Recall how you picked out a day when B. was sure not to call, for having C. to see you, and did not B. come, to your everlasting confusion? In childhood, did not your fellows search first the very place that you considered most secure? But enough, coincidences are very common; and it was nothing so very out of the way, after all, for Lady Lawler, as she turned down an alley of the gardens, to

press her husband's arm suddenly, and exclaim aloud—

"Oh! look, Richard, he is—"

She said no more, poor woman; for the gay scene, the scrubby orange trees in their tubs, the soldiers in their uniforms, all seemed to swim round and round her; while the band, which just then struck up, seemed to blare out in a triumphant shriek of derision as she fought for a moment to recover herself, and then sank slowly on to the gravel path.

Polite France formed a ring immediately, and an officer helped her husband to place madame upon a seat, while an exquisite hurried to a fountain for water.

Madame was slightly overcome. Let her try this—this—this—this.

It was a pleasure to be poorly in the garden of the Tuileries—Paris was so attentive and polite: *vinaigrettes*, scent-bottles, salts in any quantity, were at hand, but they were needless. This was no fashionable fainting fit. The *surprise* had been too sudden for the mother; but there was so much attached to the encounter that nature rapidly reasserted itself, and Lady Lawler's eyes slowly unclosed, first to look in a dazed, sleepy way in those of her husband as he bent over her, supporting her head upon his arm; then the light of intelligence came into them, and a wild look of inquiry flashed from them as her face worked, and she exclaimed passionately, heedless of the crowd around—

"Dick! Dick! why are you here?"

"Hush," he said, soothingly. "Tell me what alarmed you?"

"What! did you not see?" she exclaimed. "Oh, run quick! There, there!" she cried, pointing wildly in the direction of the band, which brayed away at a short distance. "I saw him—with his wife—going by that orange tree. Oh, Richard! Richard! for God's sake, run. I saw Rivière!"

"But madame should be taken home," murmured the condoling bystanders. "It is a hysterical attack."

"Spleen!" whispered one elaborately dressed individual to another—in fact, Monsieur Landelles, of the hotel of Great Britain and beautiful France. "They are mad with the spleen," he whispered to his neighbour. "Did you ever see!"—as, thunderstruck by the intelligence, Sir Richard Lawler paused for a moment, and then, seeing that his wife could sit up alone, darted off down the

alley in the pointed-out direction; while, seeing nothing but her husband's retiring form, Lady Lawler sat there heedless of the crowd, her hands pressed together in her lap, her handsome brow knit, and her eyes fixed and intense in their agony of suspense.

"Permit me, messieurs and mesdames," said a suave voice. "I know the lady. She is ill."

The speaker pressed through the whispering knot of people, and raised his hat to the stricken woman.

"Shall I see miladi to a fiacre?" he said, politely.

"Oh! no, no, Monsieur Landelles," exclaimed Lady Lawler, recognising their host. "Only please, please ask these people to go away. I must wait till Sir Richard comes back. Tell them I am in trouble."

Monsieur Landelles raised his hat to the surrounding group, which had partly heard her speech, and then repeated her wishes.

It was enough. There was a raising of hats, graceful bows from many a too highly dressed woman, but a polished and immediate delicacy of action. In half a minute, the landlord and Lady Lawler were alone.

But not for long. Sir Richard came up hot and flushed, looked half angrily for a moment at the highly got-up stranger, but recognised him directly.

"Oh—you, Landelles! Get us a cab directly."

Monsieur Landelles went off on the tips of his patent leather boots, as delicately as did a certain King Agag that we read of; and as soon as he was out of hearing, Sir Richard turned to his wife.

"Well?" she cried, holding one of his hands tightly in hers.

"It was a mistake," he said, as excitedly. "There was not a glimpse of him to be seen. You must have been deceived."

"No, no," said Lady Lawler, wearily, as she closed her eyes, and sank back in her seat. "I saw him quite plainly, and he saw me. And gave me a malevolent look that made me shudder. Oh, Richard, he has our darling, and you must find him out."

CHAPTER LXIV.

FOUND.

BACK at the hotel, Lady Lawler, in spite of her husband's doubts, was as certain as ever she had seen Rivière quite plainly,

and Madame Rivière was by his side. The recognition had been mutual.

"It was my foolish weakness spoiled it all, Richard," she sobbed; "but we shall see him again, of that I am sure. Let us go now."

This Sir Richard refused, and he sat thinking for a time. Should he communicate with the police?

No, that would not do: Rivière was a proscribed man, and his presence, if he were really here, must be at the risk of his being arrested. He must be setting the law at defiance. If he set the police upon his track he would alarm him, and drive him away. That would not do; he must trace him—apologize—beg pardon—do anything to disarm his resentment, so that he might bring them back their boy.

"He will give him up to me now," Sir Richard reasoned. "I am quite willing to make any concession he may ask—only let us meet."

That was a difficult task, that finding a chance of meeting; for Lady Lawler was right—Rivière was really in Paris, and they had encountered him in the Tuileries gardens. He had returned at last, reckless and despairing. Life had become to him almost a burden. To exist, he had joined the orchestra of the little theatre in Soho; but changes soon took place there, and he had played about the country, first at one and then another small provincial theatre. At times he had returned to London, inquiring at his old lodgings; but "No" was ever the response. No news of Marie; and then he had returned listlessly to his task, wandering about till the fancy took him to go back to Paris, which he had done in utter defiance of the laws—to find a surprise, though at first not welcome.

He had been wandering listlessly about through the streets, not disguised, for there had seemed to him no necessity. If he were taken, well and good; they might take him—end his life if they liked; it was worthless. But disguise was unnecessary; nature had done for him all that was requisite. He had so aged—so altered, that his nearest intimates would hardly have recognized in the worn, bent man the active little Frenchman who was once so busy with his experiments in mechanics.

Rivière was sinking lower and lower. At first, on reaching Paris, he had wandered the streets by night only, for dread of the po-

lice; but as familiarity bred contempt, and he began to realize the fact that he and his case had been forgotten—buried beneath scores, hundreds of more important offences—he grew bolder, and began to wander almost aimlessly about. His first visits had been to the places that he had once made his home, but here he learned nothing. Fresh faces met him, and a shrug of the shoulders and a shake of the head formed his response.

But when the gloom is thickest it begins to lighten, and so Rivière found. He was sauntering listlessly along the Boulevards one day, turning a wisp of a cigarette between his lips, his head bent and his hands deep down in his pockets, when suddenly a sound, somewhat like a faint gasp or a catching of the breath, made him raise his eyes, to see the back of a woman apparently carrying a child. She seemed to have turned sharply, and was making for a side street, head bent, and evidently seeking to avoid recognition.

Rivière's whole being changed in an instant—from listlessness, he seemed to be animated with a wild excitement; and he sprang after the retreating figure, gained upon it rapidly, and exclaimed in a hoarse, smothered voice—

"Marie! Marie! it is thou?"

There was no answer by word of mouth; he only saw, as it were, a shiver pass through the fugitive's frame. The head was bent lower, and a veil drawn more closely over the face.

It was a quiet, secluded street, and there were none to see Rivière as he pressed on after the retiring figure—speaking again without eliciting a response, the woman seeming to flee from him as if in horror of his presence.

At last she turned suddenly up an alley, which proved to be a deserted *cul de sac*; and here, after panting to the end, the fugitive was forced to turn and face her pursuer—pressing her child more closely to her breast, as Rivière saw her eyes flashing out at him defiantly through the thick veil.

"Marie! and have I found you at last?"

There was no answer: the woman pressed herself back from him against the farther wall, as if in dread that he should touch her, and his touch were contagion.

"Marie," he whispered, hoarsely, "I have sought you long in misery and despair. But for the hope that we should one day meet,

I should have lain down to die. I had nothing but that to live for; and now you turn from me. I—mon Dieu! I am faint again. I have not eaten—Marie—Marie—ah! you fly from me—mon Dieu!"

His voice had grown weaker as he spoke—his eyes were dim. He had, with extended hands, tried feebly to catch at the dress of her he followed, but she had eluded his grasp and fled; but as she heard that wild, hoarse cry, her footsteps faltered, and she turned for a moment to see Rivière stagger, throw up his hands as if in appeal towards Heaven, and then fall with a dead, heavy, sickening violence upon the ill-paved way.

That was enough: let him be sinner—traitor to her—the greatest scoundrel that had ever breathed, he was her husband, the father of her child, and her place was at his side. True, she had fled to free herself from the pursuit of a villain, and because she believed that her husband had forsaken her. Perhaps he had been false; but he was here, helpless and in distress, mutely appealing to her for aid. What could she do?

Behave as would a true woman under the circumstances; and the next moment she was upon her knees by his side, holding his bruised head upon her arm.

CHAPTER LXV.

NEW LIFE.

TIME. Is there such a fact, state, principle as time when a man is sick almost unto death; when he lies prone, helpless, insensible to everything but hot, burning pains, a fiery heated sky above his head, and a molten sea of metal below; scorched, scorched, ever scorched; tongue dry and cleaving, throat harsh, and furred as if with sand; and a pervading sense always troubling him of going forward—ever going forward to reach some impossible goal—to do some impossible thing; a something which he knows that he cannot do, but which he must strive, strive at always, strive at even unto death?

Fever of the brain, with that burning head tossing restlessly from side to side; eyes open and fixed on vacancy; and the lips ever busy, muttering restlessly some incoherent words; seeing no one, knowing no one. This was Rivière's state for a space, and then he seemed to awake one morning, feeling cool, and fresh, and restful. There were white hangings to his bed; there was an open window, with flowers right in front;

the sun was shining from a pure blue sky; and a bird, hanging by the window, leaped restlessly from perch to perch, and twittered, and again and again ruffled up the feathers of its throat, erected its crest, and burst forth with such a liquid trill of melody that the tears softly rose to the sick man's eyes, and overflowed upon his cheeks. Tears of saddened pleasure were they, not pain; and a faint sigh of relief came from his breast as he lay, and lay, and listened.

How calm and peaceful it all seemed—high up evidently, for he could see house-tops from where he lay.

Where was he?

It did not matter!

Why was he here?

Let it rest.

What had come before all this?

Bah! what import? Suffice it he lived and breathed, and every breath was a pleasure—a sense of bliss. Let things go—they would right themselves in time.

So he lay on, thinking dreamily, half sleeping, half waking, hour after hour, till it seemed to him that there was a sound in the room, something besides the twittering of the bird and the faint roar that ascended from the streets. Yes, there was a faint clicking noise—regular, almost, as the ticking of a clock. What could it be? It was a sound he knew so well, and yet it was a trouble to him to try and think it out. It must come.

Click—click—click—click.

Yes, there it was, so strangely regular. What could it be?

It did not trouble him, but rather seemed to amuse and divert his attention, till it was attracted by the movements of the flies above his head—darting to and fro, seeming to make diamond patterns as they intersected and crossed each other's flight in the air. There was one big, bold fly that had a liking for one particular spot on the bed hangings, from which place he would dart, hawk-like, among his fellows with a shrill buzz of anger, scattering them here and there before careering in sharp darts across and across the bed, and then returning to his post.

Those flies were quite a pleasurable rest for him, and he watched them hours, perhaps days, always till his eyes closed in a heavy, restful sleep.

Still the same calm silence—the sunshine—the soft, fresh air—the twittering bird—

and the soft, subdued click, click, click, at such regular intervals.

Was it yesterday or to-day that he heard it last? He could not tell; he could not think—only that it was some time or another, and it did not matter.

There was the click, click—

Of course, he knew the sound now. How childish not to remember!

So he thought, not feeling how his brain was really going once more through all the changes from that of infancy to manhood, and slowly too, for it was like recommencing life.

Yes, he knew the sound well enough—it was that of a needle upon a worker's thimble. Somebody must be sewing there behind the curtain, that he could not lift a hand to press aside.

He lay pondering with childish pleasure upon his discovery, a weak smile illumining his lips. But soon his face grew serious once more, for a fresh sound caught his attention—a peculiar little cooing noise that sent a shock through him. It was unmistakable, and his heart gave a throb of pleasure, he knew not why; and then his eyes turned to the right, for there was a faint rustling sound, the curtain was gently pressed back, and a thin pale face bent over him, but so changed from that of the Marie he had once known!

She did not speak, only looked inquiringly at him—inquiringly laid a cool, soft hand upon his forehead, then drew back, and the curtain fell between them.

It was only for a few moments, though; soon she was back with a cup of some cooling drink, and Rivière felt his head softly lifted, and the cup held to his lips that he might taste.

Then his pillow was turned, his head laid gently down, and the face watched his quietly and earnestly, as if seeking for a sign.

A piteous cloud gathered over Rivière's wan features as he gazed up in that quiet, stern face. It was so impassive, so still. There seemed to be interest in the countenance, certainly; but only that which a nurse might feel for a patient.

And this was his wife!—the woman he had sought for in sorrow and in bitterness! But how came he there?

He was too weary to think of it then, and it was evident that the troubled aspect of his face was deemed wrong by her who

nursed; for the soft, cool hand was gently laid upon his eyes, as if to press down the lids, and in a few minutes he was asleep—sleeping the heavy, dreamless sleep of a child.

Again he woke, hours or days after he could not tell, only that he was lying there, with the flies buzzing, the bird singing, and—yes, it was that—he listened, for there was the same click, click of the needle, and the cooing of a little child.

He began to be impatient now for the curtain to be withdrawn, and it seemed long before Marie's face appeared.

"You are better?" she said, again laying her hand upon his brow; and he responded in so faint a whisper that she had to bend to hear his reply.

But so still—so cold—he was chilled—frightened in his then weak state; and she, seeing this, left him softly, bidding him sleep.

Rivière never knew how the time went, only that he lay there dreamily passing away his hours; but, at each waking, feeling more ready to speak, while Marie grew more silent and stern. There was a gap between them, and soon Rivière felt bitterly that he had been brought there, as it were, from a charitable feeling of duty—wisely duty—owing to him; and the estrangement seemed to grow, until one day when, for the first time, he was sitting up, propped with pillows.

The day was glorious: the soft air floated in through the open window, bearing the scent of the flowers, and the bird sang more joyously than ever; while close by, Rivière could hear the soft cooing noise made by the child.

Marie had just laid straight the coverlid above the invalid, cold and stern as ever. She was about to leave him, when his thin hand was laid upon hers, and his piteous eyes sought the gaze that was averted.

"Marie!" he said, in a voice a little above a whisper, "you are misjudging me."

She started as if she had been stung. Her pale face became softened by a bright flush, and she turned upon him swiftly; but the light faded out from her eyes, her cheeks became cold and pale once more, and there was a look of bitter scorn on her countenance as she said, abruptly—

"The doctor advised that you should be silent."

"Yes, yes—I know," he answered; "but

the little one, Marie—let me see our child."

Again the bright flush came in spite of her, and their eyes met for an instant.

Then coldly, proudly, and without a word, Marie Rivière left the bedside, and returned in a few minutes with the little, fair, soft baby face nestling on her arm, she frowning the while. Another minute, and she had laid it in the father's arms.

Rivière trembled exceedingly as his feeble hand was laid upon the soft hair, while the tiny life looked from the little blue eyes straight up into his, and the lips parted for it to babble in its baby language, while a smile played about its dimpled cheeks.

"Poor little one!" murmured Rivière, with the weak tears falling fast upon the smiling face; while Marie, stern and outwardly composed, but with a fierce struggle going on within her breast, gazed intently, frowningly, from one to the other.

"Poor little one!" said Rivière again, as he stroked the soft cheeks, and the baby smiled again—"poor little one! born in the midst of trouble, when thy mother was cursing thy father's name, believing him to be a scoundrel—a traitor—and that he had forsaken her for another!"

Marie stood rigid and scornful still by the bedside, watching them, but the struggle was bitter still within her breast.

"Ah, tiny flame of life, what a chance was thine to come when so fierce a storm was around—when thy father had been seized, and lay a prisoner in a gaol week after week, while she to whom he had never failed in truth, believed him false. God help us, little one, for we need him sore!"

"Louis!"

One word only, but what a bitter cry! How the woman's heart went forth to him she loved in that one short utterance! The cold, stern look was gone, and the face was working; hysterical sobs were struggling for utterance, as Marie threw herself at the bedside, caught his hand in hers, and panted out—

"Louis!—husband, tell me—I was deceived!"

His eyes told her as he turned them upon her, and the next moment she was weeping out her sorrow upon his breast, one thin arm clasping her, while upon the other rested their child, lying faintly cooing for awhile, but at last to sleep as the sun was tinging the sky before the window with a

wondrous golden orange hue—a light which glorified that poor Parisian attic, where the mother, beating down her misery, had hidden herself from the world, stitching as a seamstress for her child, and afterwards to keep the husband whom she believed to have been a liar to his vows; bringing him to her poor home, nursing him through a fever that had threatened death, but at last to find that she had falsely judged, and that he was true.

"Let me sleep," whispered Rivière, softly. "Marie!—wife! I have been true."

The golden orange paled into lambent yellow, the yellow into green shot with a wondrous purple, and then one deep dark blue was all o'erhead—a veil of darkness spangled with lustrous stars, which seemed to flash forth glorious rays into that room where, weak, feeble with his illness, the little Frenchman slept, with the little one lying on his breast, while Marie Rivière knelt praying by their side.

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER XIV.

"There's not a string attuned to mirth
But has its chord in melancholy."—*Hood.*

ON the morning of the next day after the events related in the previous chapter, Mr. Græme sat thoughtfully before his yet untasted breakfast. He had poured out some coffee, and cut off the top of an egg, but beyond that all further action in the edible line seemed totally out of his power just then; for he had heard news which troubled him greatly. According to time-honoured custom, he had mounted his horse at half-past seven, and set out before breakfast on his usual tour of inspection around his fields: for he farmed the glebe himself. He had not ridden many paces from his door, when, to his astonishment, he was joined by Mr. Brownsmith, seated on a short-legged, rough little pony, on whose ribs he never ceased beating a tattoo with the butt-end of his cane, in order to keep him up to the pace of the parson's long-striding steed. In vain did Mr. Græme endeavour to get rid of this self-inflicted Sancho Panza; but there was no giving him the slip: he stuck to his heels like a leech, following him, with a self-satisfied smile, through acres of upturned soil, and long arguments with his head farming man as to

the respective merits of liquid manure and "Thorley's farinaceous cattle food." When Mr. Græme had settled the wants of his land and cattle to his own satisfaction, he turned his attention to his faithful friend, and tried by extra courtesy to make up for his seeming neglect. But his commonplaces were soon cut short by Mr. Brownsmith unfolding a tale which set the clerical heart on fire, and well-nigh turned the reverend gentleman's head.

"If it is true," said he, breaking a piece of toast, "I may hope to have my dreams of happiness fulfilled; but I will say nothing until they are married. Mr. Brownsmith said it was to be soon, to enable them to go abroad for their honeymoon, and come back to Islington Court for Christmas. I have waited so many years, that a month with hope at the end of it will not seem long. Yet there is something in the way things have turned out that I do not understand; for at one time they loved each other, of that I am certain—there was no hiding it from one who loves Agnes as I do. I feel now I cannot meet her until I have positively ascertained that there is nothing between her and Captain Nolan. Yes, it is always best to get to the root of a matter before taking action; so I will give the Brownsmiths a call before going to the Hall to-day."

"There is an air of comfort and respectability in a blazing fire and well-lit table," thought Johnson, as he walked out of the dining-room that evening, after placing before Agnes some of the best wine that the Heathfield cellars could produce. She sat at the end of the long table, with her head resting on her hand, trying to persuade herself that she had ordered the wine for her own special benefit, whereas her heart told her it was for another. She knew he hated poor sherry, so was determined to have some good, if he did come. But despair whispered, "He will not come, it is nonsense to expect him." Had she not been brought face to face with her rival, and seen him choose between them? He would only be too glad of an excuse to break off their engagement. Then hope would thrust in her claim to be heard. If he wished to be free, would he not have accepted her offer at once? She only proposed to cancel their engagement if it was a bar to his happiness. Surely, not hearing from him was a good sign: he wished

to punish her for doubting his love. He was quite right not to write, he would come himself; for they would have so much to say when they did meet. How she wished now she had never written that note; but at the time she was so stung at his seeming indifference to her, when she had come so far from home under great difficulties to see him, that she could not help feeling it bitterly. And so she continued keeping the scales pretty evenly balanced with built and shattered castles, till roused by the howling of the wind as it rushed down the passage from an open door. She knew the cause of the sound—some one was entering the house by the hall door.

There was a step, a murmuring of voices, then all was still. Heavens! would her heart be quiet, and let her listen. The footstep now came on alone. Ah! he had dismissed the servants. It stopped at the door; it must be he. The handle turned. Grasping the arms of her chair, Agnes rose; but the tension on her nerves of late had been too strong; her head whirled round, her sight became dim, her feet seemed to slide from under her, as, faintly whispering, "Phil!" she felt two arms gently replacing her in her chair. On consciousness beginning to return, she did not dare so much as to open her eyes, so fearful was she lest she should find her happiness a dream; but becoming aware that the protecting arms had been withdrawn, and somewhat surprised at the total silence that reigned in the room, she again said, softly, "Phil!" Her answer was a groan drawn from a grieved man's heart. Starting up, she opened her eyes, to see Mr. Græme standing by her side, his arms crossed, his head bowed down in anguish on his breast, as he vainly tried to hide his bitter emotion.

There is something so awful in a man's deep sorrow, that it hushes the most thoughtless of witnesses. To Agnes it was perfectly appalling. She neither moved nor spoke; but sat with wide staring eyes, fascinated on the man beside her. All at once burst upon her mind the import of his presence; and, sinking her head on the table, she moaned out—

"Phil loves me no more!"

As the sight of her supposed happiness had quite unmanned Mr. Græme, so now her grief at once recalled to him his lost self-possession. Taking in the situation at a glance, he saw that she had been expect-

ing Captain Nolan; and having heard from him and Miss Brownsmith that very afternoon the announcement of their intended marriage, his blood boiled with indignation as he jumped to the conclusion that she had been purposely deceived. Laying his hand gently on her head, which she immediately threw off with a defiant jerk, he said, in a low, nervous voice—

"Agnes, I have prayed God from my soul to be spared giving you pain; yet I have a duty to perform from which I cannot escape, even though it make you hate me for ever." He paused for a reply, but was only answered by the beating of his own heart. "There is no one else to tell you, so I must," continued he, with agitation. "My child, I am afraid you do not know that Captain Nolan is engaged to be married to Miss Brownsmith."

"In what old woman's house did you hear that gossip?" exclaimed Agnes, with flashing eyes.

"You do not believe it; but it is true—true as I stand here, true as Heaven."

"Then I do not believe in Heaven," shrieked she, half mad with fear that it might be true.

"You force me to tell you, I heard it from her lips—I heard it from *his*," exclaimed he, with bitter emphasis on the *his*.

For the third time her head sank dejectedly down on the table. This was proof positive; there was no doubting the truth of Mr. Græme's story any longer. Here was the explanation why she had received no answer. It was quick work, this breaking off one engagement and entering on a new one in less than twenty-four hours; she could hardly expect a reply till this new affair was settled. But what did she want with an answer at all?—she already knew enough.

"God alone knows what it cost me to tell you," groaned out Mr. Græme, half beside himself at the sight of her misery. "Agnes, have pity on me, say you do not hate me for it?"

"I do, I do! Go, go!" said she, fiercely, pointing to the door.

He left the room without a word; and going into the hall, sat down mournfully by the fire, to think over all that had passed during the quarter of an hour he had been in the house. Happily, his sad thoughts were soon disturbed by Johnson coming in with a note, and inquiring if Miss Lane had gone upstairs.

"I will take the note to Miss Lane. She is very much distressed about Mrs. Manning to-night," added Mr. Græme, in a confidential tone, well knowing that it is always best to appear open to tried and faithful domestics. And at that moment he felt as if he could have told a hundred lies to spare her one grain of sorrow.

Taking the note, he walked miserably into the dining-room, and laid it on the table before Agnes, saying—

"I thought you would rather I brought it than Johnson."

"Who is it from?" said a stifled voice, from the table cloth.

"It is Captain Nolan's handwriting," said he, slowly.

"Don't go," said she, opening the note, which contained the few following words, slantingdicularly scrawled across the first page:—

"Red House, 6.30 p.m.

"DEAR MISS LANE—I accept your offer of cancelling our engagement, and am glad you became aware of your feelings before it was too late.—Yours obediently,

"PHILIP NOLAN."

Her tears flowed fast, as she finished reading the note, and she remained perfectly silent for some time; then turning to Mr. Græme, she said—

"I have been very rude to you. I am sorry for it—I think I was mad at first. I hope you will forgive me; it is so difficult to know who really is your friend."

"What can I do? I will bring Captain Nolan here; I will make him explain his conduct. I will do anything you wish," said he, excitedly.

"No; I wish nothing now, except never to hear his name again." Then, after a pause, "Will you go up and see my aunt? I will come to her when you leave."

"Oh, God! how good he is to me, and yet how I hate the sight of him," thought Agnes, as Mr. Græme left the room to retail his news to Mrs. Manning upstairs.

AFTER DINNER AT ISLINGTON COURT.

Captain Nolan turned with languid steps from shutting the door on Mrs. and Miss Brownsmith. Would any money ever compensate him for the infliction of the former's society? He doubted it—as he

sat down on a chair, half-way up the table, and began twiddling with an empty glass.

On the departure of his wife and daughter, Mr. Brownsmith had turned to the fire, which he was now affectionately regarding through his well-filled glass.

"This is good wine, captain—very. Do you mark the crust? I never give less than a hundred and twenty for my port. Cannot get any good under that price," said he, looking up in expectation of an approving nod from Phil; but seeing no one at the fireplace, he became terribly alarmed that he had been left solus, and cheated out of the pleasure of a talk. For the sound of his own voice was as music to Mr. Brownsmith, and it was a joy he rarely could gratify, inasmuch as it could only be accomplished when his better-half was out of the way; so, fidgeting round, he anxiously exclaimed, "Where are you, captain?—not gone with the ladies, I do hope. Ah!" catching sight of him, "out in the cold there. Come, take this arm-chair by the fire, and have some port; then, when we are agreeably settled, we can talk over business quietly."

"There is no reason why I should not be as comfortable as I can under the circumstances," thought Captain Nolan, "so I will accept the old boy's offer; but first I will give him a glorious account of my affairs, and see if I cannot disabuse him of the absurd idea he has of my virtues." So, taking the vacant arm-chair, he began—"You propose reversing the usual order of things. You know, Mr. Brownsmith, it is duty first, pleasure afterwards; and I feel I cannot drink your wine with a free conscience without first confessing to you my sins."

"My dear boy," said Mr. Brownsmith, stooping forward, and waving his glass in his future son-in-law's face, "that is an admirable sentiment in the mouth of an officer in her Majesty's service, and just what I expected of you; but, as Nelson said, 'Every Englishman should do his duty'—just so, our duty is to finish this bottle, our pleasure in finishing it, and that is what I call sound logic."

Without regard to Mr. Brownsmith's convincing argument, Captain Nolan, as soon as he could get in a word, commenced his confession—

"I have little or no money, I am in debt, I——"

"Not another word, if you please. You

think I don't know your affairs—I fancy I know them better than yourself. There, now. I have let it all out, though Mrs. Brownsmith particularly told me I was not to do so. But this is how it happened: My wife got hold of some story, how that you had run through all your property——”

“Which was nil,” soliloquized Phil.

“Were entirely in the hands of the Jews; and that—that—in fact you were——”

“A hopeless reprobate,” put in Phil.

“Exactly so; thank you, my dear boy, for supplying the word. No offence meant.”

“Of course not, that is understood,” echoed Phil.

“Well, when I saw how matters stood, that my little girl was beginning to be fond of you—and you, though you would not show it at the time, were of her—I set inquiries on foot, and soon found out there was nothing but a few paltry hundreds at the bottom of all this.”

“Tell me, were these reports about me widely circulated?”

“Oh, women always gossip.”

“But I mean were they known about here?—say, by any one in the village?”

“I know my wife told Mrs. Manning; but beyond that I can't say——”

“Did she tell her when she found there was no truth in them?” broke in Phil.

“Why, no!” laughed Mr. Brownsmith, “that would have been letting the cat out of the bag—just like what I have been doing to you; and Mrs. Brownsmith is far too clever a woman to make a slip like that. I see, captain, you are not half sharp enough to look after your own interests. I shall have to manage them for you; and, in the first place, I want to settle these small debts, then set about restoring your house at once. But there is one stipulation I must make. Julia is my only child, and I cannot let her go to India. I will give you three thousand a year to stay in England.”

“Good God! I have no wish to return to the vile place,” exclaimed Phil, torn with conflicting emotions.

“Then I will make it four.”

Four thousand a year, and no more of hated India! That finally decided the question.

“I cannot think how I have merited such generosity,” said Phil, quite humbled at his good fortune.

“Why, it is plain enough; I always said

to Julia, ‘Take any one you like—all I ask is that he shall be a gentleman and a good shot, and I will come down with the money.’ Now, a bargain is a bargain, and as she has done more than fulfilled her part of the agreement—for are not you also a captain in her Majesty's Royal Horse Artillery?—and I always was fond of you young dogs in the army: besides, we all like you—Julia did from the first; so it is only right that I should lay down a little more than I promised. Why, bless you, when Julia is married, we sha'n't know how to spend our money. I never had a son, or it might have been different; but I feel sure, if I had had one, he would have been just like you.”

Captain Nolan, not relishing these back-handed compliments, rose from his arm-chair, and stretched himself before the fire, as it now suited him to remember that tea had been announced some time ago.

“I am afraid we shall be in Mrs. Brownsmith's black books if we keep her waiting any longer.”

“Eh, what? Surely not tea-time? they do have it so confoundedly soon after dinner nowadays; but you are right, we must not keep my wife waiting. My dear boy,” continued Mr. Brownsmith, with a sudden burst of confidence, “you won't betray me; for though Mrs. Brownsmith makes an excellent wife, and is a very clever woman, yet she has a temper which is awful, perfectly appalling sometimes, I can assure you; and if she was to find out what I had told you this evening there would be the very devil to pay. You need not be afraid of her, for you are a great favourite; and as to Julia, why she is soft-hearted like me, not a bit like her mother, does not take after her in the least—not in the least, I can assure you,” reiterated Mr. Brownsmith, showing by his vehemence that he set no light value on his daughter not resembling her mother.

“Wonder where she gets her beauty from?—for most decidedly it is neither from papa nor mamma,” thought Phil, as they crossed the hall.

THE CIRCLE OF FIRE.

“BY Jove!” said I, stopping short as I entered the room, “I've seen *that* somewhere before.”

I had walked that day from Kutais, and

was not sorry to catch sight of the projecting roof and painted front of the quaint little post-station, as they were suddenly revealed to me by a turn of the road. After a forty mile tramp under the sun of the Caucasus, with a substantial knapsack on one's shoulders, very humble accommodation suffices; and I, having thrown aside my coat and heavy boots, and plunged my swollen feet into cold water, sat down to black bread and weak tea in that quaint little room, with its plank walls and dusty crossbeams, with a feeling of enjoyment which I had never experienced amid the luxuries of the Erzherzog Karl or Missirie's.

But, while sipping my tea, I cannot forbear glancing again and again at the rude engraving on the opposite wall, which had attracted my attention immediately upon entering. It is a clumsy affair enough—a mere welter of charging Circassians round a handful of dismounted Cossacks, without a thought of proportion or perspective; but, rude as it is, I recognized in it the exact likeness of a battle which I had seen represented, three years before, in a huge amphitheatre on the Admiralty Plain, during the Carnival at St. Petersburg. Little by little the whole scene comes back to me: the shadowy gorge, half revealed by fitful gleams of moonlight; the dead stillness, broken suddenly by the charging hoofs; the wild yell and headlong rush of the mail-clad cavalry; the granite firmness of the grey-coated ranks behind their hedge of steel, from which burst ever and anon the flash and crack of the fatal musketry; the sudden scattering of the Tcherkesse squadrons, and their spectral disappearance into the shadows of the mountain. The same battle, beyond a doubt; the only difference being that in the picture before me the defenders are, as I have said, not Russian Grenadiers, but Tchernemorski Cossacks.

My frequent glances at the picture at length attract the attention of my host—a tall, wiry Cossack, whom the two medals that decorate his broad chest mark as a veteran in Circassian warfare. Across his swarthy cheek runs a long, dark-red scar, a souvenir of the Tcherkesse sabre, received in the days when the bones of Prince Vorontzoff's army whitened every gorge of Daghestan, and the crack of Schamyl's rifles awakened the echoes of every mountain-side from Derbent to Redut-Kaleh. Following the direction of my eyes, the old fire-eater

nods his head with a complacent grin, as if to say, "I could tell you something about that if I chose."

"Were *you* in that affair?" ask I, pointing to the picture.

"Aye, that I was," answers the old fellow, triumphantly; "and hot work we had of it, while it lasted. You should have seen how those dogs came rushing on, firing their rifles right in our faces, and how we rubbed their noses for 'em with the butt-end of our pieces! I thought it was fated for us to leave our bones there—aye, that did I; but, as we say, 'God helps the man who helps himself.' They're brave fellows, though, those Tchetchentzi, there's no denying it; but for all that they found us Russians too hard a bit for them to swallow that time!"

"Well, I'll tell you what," said I; "I'm in no hurry to move, and this is just the time for a good story; so suppose you sit down and tell me all about it."

Nothing loath, the veteran seats himself, refills his short, black pipe, takes a whiff or two by way of inspiration, and then launches into his story, which, to spare my readers the innumerable digressions and reflections that garnished it, I give in my own words.

It is a fine summer morning in the Caucasus, and the little outpost of Tchervalon is all in a bustle. News has just come in that the Tchetchentzi, Schamyl's own peculiar people—who are to Russia what the Pequod Indians were to the first colonists of New England—are in the field again. Fifteen hundred of them, so says the breathless scout, have made a swoop from the mountains during the night, "stuck up" (as Australians say) the village of Akboulakiourt, made a glorious haul of prisoners and plunder, and are off to the hills with their booty, confident that no "Moscov dog" can catch them up. That, however, remains to be seen; for the Cossacks of Tchervalon have turned out at the first alarm, and "boot and saddle" is the word for every man who can mount. The colonel's instructions are precise: he is to pursue at once, and endeavour to recover the booty, with the assurance of being supported by a strong column of infantry from the post of Kourinski, under General Moudell. Away, then, go the handful of brave men—barely one hundred strong, including their officers—gleeful as a schoolboy on a holiday, at the prospect of the "lark" which lies before them. A

glorious summer morning, deliciously cool before the scorching heat of the day; a boundless stretch of level plain under foot—just the place for a hard gallop; a clear blue sky overhead, with the first glow of sunrise just tinting the great white mountain peaks far away to the north; the certainty of a deadly battle a few hours later. What more can soldier's heart desire? And the hard face of the veteran leader brightens visibly as he turns to his aide-de-camp, a bright, fair-haired lad of one or two and twenty, who rides on his left hand.

"Fine morning for a gallop, eh, Pavel Ivanoitch?*" This is better than being pent up between two walls all day long?"

"A great deal better," answers the young subaltern, with his frank, boyish laugh. "I thought, somehow, that we should have some fun to-day; and so we shall, sure enough."

Little does he guess how the day is to end!

And so the chase sweeps on, over the wide loneliness of the grey, unending steppe, across the little stream of the Bakh, past the burning ruins of Akboulakiourt, which still blot the clear sky with their thick, dingy smoke—striking at length upon the trail of the retreating enemy, at sight of which a wild Cossack "Hourra!" goes up into the still air, as some keen-eyed veteran announces that it is still but a few hours old.

"We shall catch them yet!" cries young Fediouskin, waving his hand joyously; and Major Kampkoff, the second in command—a big, solid, taciturn fellow from Central Russia—responds with a grunt of satisfaction too deep for words.

But it is with cavalry in pursuit as with infantry on a forced march: the less seasoned begin to fall away in the rear after a time. Before reaching Akboulakiourt Colonel Soussloff has left forty-four of his men on the road; but, about an hour after leaving the burned village, he recruits his little band with a picket of forty Cossacks, who have been put on the alert by the passage of the retiring Circassians. Forward again, faster than ever! For now comes a dull, booming sound, thrice repeated, far away to the right—a sound familiar to every man of the squadron.

"Cannon firing at Kourinski! then

* Paul the Son of John. In Russia every man has a double name, his own Christian name and that derived from his father's. It is customary to address him by both.

General Moudell must be astir—perhaps already engaged. Forward all!" So thinks Colonel Soussloff, little expecting, what becomes fatally clear a little later, that these guns are but signals of alarm, that the infantry supports are not even on the march yet, and what he is actually doing is rushing headlong with ninety-six men against fifteen hundred! Not till many weary hours are past, not till the hardest fight has been fought which the peaks of the Caucasus have looked down upon, will the promised succour arrive; and when it does come, it will come too late for many of us. Forward all!

Meanwhile the Circassians, encumbered with their booty, are slowly retiring toward the mountains, confident in their safety from pursuit. And now, as the sun peers above the horizon, the outermost spurs of the Caucasus rise before them, stark and grim against the lustrous sky; while upon the great plain behind, as far as the eye can reach, there is no living thing in sight. But, as the proverb says, "the Circassian's ear hears grass sprout and wool grow;" and the hindmost of the marauders can already distinguish a dull rumble far in the rear, not to be confounded with the trampling of their own horse-hoofs. Louder and nearer comes the sound, and at length, in the far distance, rises a dark spot, with an ominous glitter of bright sparks running through it, shooting towards them swift and unswervingly. One of the rearward Circassians spurs his horse up a little mound to the right, and from thence reconnoitres the approaching enemy.

"They are but a handful!" he shouts, scornfully, shaking his hand as if flinging away a pinch of dust, "One *sotnia*" (squadron) "of Cossacks, and no support in sight!"

"Good," grows a stalwart khan, laughing grimly, as he loosens his sabre in its sheath. "If it please Allah, these dogs shall get their due. Face about, my children, and let us swallow up the unbelievers!"

And, spreading out into a far extending line, the whole fifteen hundred swoop down at once upon the handful of pursuers.

At a glance Colonel Soussloff takes in the whole situation. No supports coming; no chance of escape with these spent horses; the enemy upon us, fifteen to one—there is nothing left but to die hard and dearly. Quick as lightning the Cossacks dismount, range their horses in a circle, with the bridles knotted together, and, levelling their pieces

over this living rampart, stand grimly at bay.

"Fire!" roars the colonel, as the charging line comes rolling upon them like a wave, and the whole volley rings out like one shot.

When the smoke clears away, many a stalwart man lies rolling on the earth outside that circle of fire; but the trap has fairly closed at last. All around the ring is a sea of fierce faces, and horses' heads, and gleaming sabres, and levelled carbines. And now the battle begins in earnest—fifteen against one. All the air is filled with hot, sulphury smoke, and the roll of musketry from either side is like one continued peal of thunder; while patter, patter, come the bullets, thick as hail, hissing through the grass, or plunging with a dull thud into the body of horse or man. Ever and anon, as the stifling cloud lifts itself for a moment, the doomed men within the ring see the face of some comrade suddenly stiffen in death, or writhe with mortal agony as he falls helplessly to the earth. Load and fire, load and fire, regularly as if on parade. Outside the circle are fierce yells and cries, groans of pain, shouts of triumph; within, neither shout nor groan, but the dead, grim silence of men who know how to die. The living wall begins to yield, as horse after horse falls dead; but the devoted band pile the slain men upon the slain beasts, and fire over the corpses of their comrades, as if from behind a parapet. Load and fire, load and fire again! How long has this lasted? Five minutes? an hour? days? There is no count of time in such work as this. And how long can it last? Already nine of the Cossacks lie dead; twenty more are severely wounded, and have torn their shirts to staunch the blood that flows from them. Ammunition is beginning to run short. But the colonel, with his own hand, empties the pouches of the dead, distributes their cartridges to the survivors, and the battle begins anew.

And now the Circassians, furious at being withstood so long, come close up to the impenetrable circle, and aim beneath the horses' bodies at the exposed limbs of the defenders; but their glittering accoutrements make them a fair mark for the Cossacks, who mow them down again and again as they come on. At a little distance, the whole face of the prairie around the fatal circle is like a great flower garden, with the

gay dresses of the slaughtered enemy; while within the ring the earth is black with fallen Cossacks. At this close range every shot tells; and the three Russian officers, as the leading agents of this desperate resistance, are specially marked for destruction. Colonel Soussloff, firing his last pistol shot among his swarming assailants, hears a sharp cry beside him, and turns just in time to catch in his arms young Fediouskin, whose bright face is white and shrunken with pain.

"Are you hurt, my boy?" asks the stout colonel, tenderly.

"My thigh's broken," answered the subaltern, biting his lips to keep down a rising groan.

"For God's sake, then," whispers the colonel, "catch hold of something—cling to my shoulder if you like; but don't fall, whatever you do! If the men see *you* go down, they'll lose heart at once. It all depends upon us officers now!"

"Never fear!" replies the gallant boy, writhing his blue lips into a smile; "I'll keep my feet as long as I'm wanted."

And, clutching the mane of his horse, he remains upright; while the colonel, flinging his now useless pistols at the advancing enemy, draws his sword for the hand-to-hand struggle.

But, all this while, what is doing at Kourinski? The infantry supports were ready long ago, but the column has unluckily taken the wrong direction at starting, and is still pursuing it, when the uproar of the battle, breaking like a thunderstorm upon the dead stillness of early morning, shows where the real work lies. In an instant the order is given to wheel to the left, and the Grenadiers hasten at their utmost speed toward the scene of action, guided by the din of sixteen hundred carbines all firing at once.

But, hasten as they may, the chances are sorely against their arriving in time; for the besieged handful is already at its last gasp. The Circassians, frantic at the long resistance and the fearful slaughter which it has wrought, have flung themselves pell-mell upon, the impregnable circle, as if to overwhelm it by sheer weight of numbers. All round the ring it is one welter of slashing sabres and pounding gun-stocks, blood spurting on every side like the jet of a syringe, and death coming blindly, no one knows how. Cossacks throttle Circassians, Circassians fasten their teeth upon Cossacks; even the wounded and dying grap-

ple on the ground, and are found, after the battle is over, dead in each other's gripe. Colonel Soussloff, with one foot on the body of his horse, hews right and left, like a woodman felling timber; Sergeant Pioulkoff, beside him, cuts off at one blow the hand and arm of a Circassian, as one would slice a cucumber; Major Kampkoff, having broken his sword, snatches up a carbine, and pounds away with the butt-end, as if thrashing corn. But on come the enemy, like waves of the sea. Man on man fall the Cossacks, fighting to the last. A moment more, and the Circassians are within the circle; and then—

Suddenly there comes a light upon the colonel's grim face, never seen there before or after. He waves his hand toward the west, and his voice rises above all the infernal din—

"Courage, lads! here is help coming at last!"

It is even so. Far in the distance appear a troop of horsemen at full gallop—the Cossacks who were left behind on the road hastening to join in the fray. At the same moment a distant cheer is heard in the opposite direction, and the sun flashes upon a long row of points—the bayonets of Moudell's infantry, coming swiftly to the rescue. Then rises on high a shout of triumph from the fainting Cossacks, a howl of rage from the baffled enemy. Nearer and nearer come the horsemen; plainer and plainer appears the dark column of infantry. The Circassians fire one last volley, and, abandoning their booty, vanish among the hills like a flight of vultures.

And now, the great work being done, wounded and unwounded alike sink exhausted among the bodies of the dead; and the gallant Fediouskin, who has remained erect for nearly an hour with his thigh broken, gives way at last. Moudell's Grenadiers make trestles of the Circassian lances, and bear back the wounded to Kourinski. Five of them die on the following morning, many more a few days later; but all who survive are marked for reward. The three officers are promoted, and a substantial largess is distributed among the men. Colonel Soussloff himself receives the Cross of St. George (the highest of Russian military decorations), and survives many years to express his wonder at the admiration lavished upon "such a *simple* thing as that which he had done."

HOW I WAS SOLD.

IN TWO PARTS.—II.

THE lights were shortly afterwards extinguished in the saloon. A few of the male passengers returned to the promenade deck to smoke a last cigar before retiring to rest; but the majority remained below to seek their berths, while the few who occupied state-rooms on deck took possession of them. In half an hour I was once more left alone.

There was a wooden awning built over the after-deck, in the rear of the saloon, though, of course, the air had free access on all sides. It was a lovely, starlit night, slightly but not unpleasantly cool, after the sultry heat of the day. I had seated myself in the stern of the boat, and was watching the numerous lake market-boats gliding silently over the smooth water—the white sails of those at a distance, indistinctly seen in the darkness, causing them to appear like phantom vessels—when the captain made his appearance to take a last look at the night.

Presently he espied me, and came towards me—

"A fine night, sir," he said, cheerfully, as he drew near, and seated himself on the skylight.

I assented, somewhat moodily.

"You have a state-room on deck, I presume?" he continued.

"No," I replied.

"No! Then you've looked out your berth in the cabin? If you haven't, I should recommend you to do so. We try to accommodate everybody; but where there are so many passengers, there are always some who *will* encroach upon the comforts of others, if they have the chance."

"I have no berth," I replied. "I do not wish for one."

The captain looked somewhat earnestly at me, trying to distinguish my features amid the darkness.

"I beg your pardon," he said, presently; "but may I ask whether you are not the gentleman who declined to take supper this evening? I was sorry when the steward mentioned the circumstance to me, and would have come on deck to invite you down myself, but I could not well leave the ladies. I hope you have met with no unpleasantness from any of the company? I

should be really sorry if such be the case."

The captain spoke so kindly, that I really could not find courage to tell him that I was annoyed at the detention of the boat; and I replied that I had no cause for complaint, but that I felt unwell.

"Then why did you not say so?" he went on. "Perhaps you would have liked something brought to you on deck? Can I tell the steward to get you anything now? Is there anything you would especially fancy? We have almost everything on board."

"Nothing, thank you, nothing," I replied.

"But surely, if you feel unwell, you won't remain on deck through the night? The nights, though pleasant, are somewhat chill. You will catch your death of cold. I am sorry. If I had known in time, I would have secured you a state-room. But the cabin berths are really very nice and airy. Let me find one for you now."

"Thank you," I replied; "but I prefer to remain on deck. I could not bear the close confinement of the cabin. I shall do very well with my cloak thrown over me."

The captain, however, insisted upon having a mattress brought upon deck, and was about to summon one of the waiters, and bid him fetch one; but I knew that in such case the waiter would expect a gratuity, even if I were not expected to pay the price of a berth for the use of a mattress, as would most probably be the case. I therefore objected so strongly, protesting that I would not lie down to sleep, that at length he ceased to press the mattress upon me. And after trying in vain to induce me to drink a glass of wine, or a little warm spirits and water, he left me to myself, telling me to be sure and ring a bell, which he pointed out, in case I should need anything during the night; and expressing an earnest hope that I would find myself quite recovered from my indisposition in the morning.

I really passed the night very comfortably upon deck, sleeping as soundly as if I had been in a berth below or in a bed on shore. But when morning came, I had consumed my little store of biscuits, and smoked out my cigar; and I felt stiff, chill, and hungry.

The captain came himself to invite me down to breakfast; but I still pleaded ill health; and though I was not really ill, I dare say I appeared to be so, after sleeping all night in the open air.

"I don't suppose there is a doctor within miles, nor have we one on board, or I would ask you to see him," said the captain, with real anxiety. "But you *must* take something. Let me send you up a cup of tea or coffee, and a roll or some toast. You will starve to death going on this way."

I thought myself that that was very probable, if we did not soon run into Picton. Still, I refused the captain's kind offer. However, I had still a quarter of a dollar left out of my sixty-three cents. The good feeding going on, and the well-satisfied looks of my fellow-passengers, made me feel more hungry than I should otherwise have felt. A glass of ale and a couple of biscuits, I thought, would not cost more than ten or twelve cents at the utmost; and I said that I thought I could perhaps drink a glass of ale, and eat a biscuit.

"Ah, do try," said the captain. "Perhaps, when you have taken something, you will soon feel all right again, and we shall have you at the table with us at dinner-time."

He went away to give the order to a waiter. The passengers had gone down to breakfast, to the sound of the irrepressible gong, and in a few minutes a negro boy appeared with a tray, upon which were a glass of ale, and a plate of biscuits of different sorts. I drank the ale with an avidity that I could scarcely conceal, and, taking two of the biscuits, asked what I had to pay.

The darkey grinned—

"I don't know, sar. S'pose, sar, what you please give, I tank you," he replied.

I handed him my last quarter-dollar, and told him to pay the steward out of that.

He grinned again, and disappeared; but he failed to return with the change, with which I had purposed to pay for another glass of ale in the course of the day.

After breakfast steam was got up. The boat was cast loose from the wharf, and was soon proceeding on her way, not down the lake, however, as I expected, but close along the north shore; and, to my great disappointment and vexation, I soon learnt, from the conversation of the passengers, that the engineers had been unable to complete their work at the little landing-place, in consequence of their inability to procure some indispensable material, and that we were going into Toronto to complete the job.

The passengers, however, appeared to take matters easily. Several among them

even expressed their satisfaction at the prospect of paying a visit to Toronto.

My vexation, however, was so great that I could scarcely reply with civility to those persons who, having heard of my supposed indisposition, came to condole with me. It increased my annoyance to see them so well pleased, so content, and so happy.

"I am truly sorry. You would have enjoyed the trip so much; and Captain Baldwin is such a charming man—he takes so *much* pains to make us comfortable," said one lady.

"I should have enjoyed the trip much more if the boat had landed me at Picton yesterday evening, as she might have done," I replied; and the lady and her friends, I have no doubt, set me down as a sulky, disagreeable fellow.

"A regular spoil-fun, sitting there so glum and sulky," I heard one young lady say to a young gentleman who was extremely attentive to her. "He oughtn't to have been permitted to come on such a trip as this. Thank Heaven, he does intend to leave us at Picton—the sooner the better."

"The sooner the better for me, too," I thought to myself, "though I fear I shall be too late to meet my friends."

The passengers soon began to hold themselves aloof from me, and to leave me to my solitude. But the captain continued to sympathize with me, and frequently seated himself by my side and endeavoured to cheer me.

"When do you think we shall reach Picton, captain?" I inquired, as the boat was putting into Toronto, about noon. "I don't doubt that I shall feel better when I get ashore."

"Well, for your sake, my dear sir," he replied, "I hope to reach Picton before midnight; though, if you had been well, I should have liked you to have gone the entire trip to Montreal with us. We shall not remain long at Toronto. It is merely some oil for greasing the machinery that is wanted. Unfortunately, it was forgotten in the confusion of starting, and we could get none at the place where we lay last night."

I spoke of the disappointment that I found the detention would cause me.

"But surely, my dear sir," replied the captain, "you were informed that this was a trial trip; and I must say I think it was foolish of you to run the risk of such disappointment. You must be aware that delays fre-

quently occur during such trips. New machinery will often work stiffly, as has been the case with ours; and if you required to be at Picton at a stated time, you might have travelled by rail."

I could not reply to this, for I had heard at the hotel that this was the trial trip of the *General Cass*. The captain, however, was so kind and considerate, that I sincerely regretted that I had not told him how I was situated when I first came on board. I was perfectly confident that he would have accepted my explanations, and would gladly have provided me with anything I required, on my promising to repay him on my return to Montreal.

It was, however, too late to think of this now. The passengers, when they saw me eating heartily at the table, after professing to be so unwell, would be sure to suspect the truth, and I should be the laughing-stock of all on board. So I determined to adhere to my original statement, and starve till I should land at Picton.

The boat, however, was detained at Toronto two or three hours longer than the captain had anticipated. Something else was discovered to be the matter with the machinery; and it was two o'clock when at length we steamed out of the harbour, and shaped our course down the lake.

Dinner had been postponed until we should leave the harbour; but we had not been ten minutes under weigh before the gong once more sent forth its discordant sound throughout the boat, and the hungry passengers descended to the cabin to enjoy the meal.

The pleasant savour of the various viands came wafted by the breeze to the deck, where I still kept my seat. I heard the rattle of the knives and forks, and the frequent calls of the hungry passengers, who were enjoying themselves below. I saw the waiters passing to and fro, with dainty dishes, and sweetmeats, and confectionery, and fruits of every description, while I sat starving; and the sight and sounds, and the appetizing fumes, made my craving for food more fierce. I felt as savage as a hungry wolf, and could have snatched the dishes from the waiters' hands had I dared.

Then came the clinking of glasses; and a loud shout, accompanied by a clapping of hands, was followed by a murmur of words, and I knew that the captain's health and success to the *General Cass* had been pro-

posed and drunk with full honours; and that the captain had returned his thanks for the honour done him; and I was compelled to listen, in spite of myself, yet was unable to take my share of the enjoyment that was going on below!

I cursed the negro waiter in my heart, for keeping the change out of the poor quarter-dollar I had given him, and thus preventing me from appeasing my increasing hunger, even with another glass of ale and a biscuit.

At length the passengers came pouring up upon deck, and into the saloon; many of the gentlemen flushed with wine, and even the eyes of some among the ladies sparkling with unusual brightness.

Nor did the revel now end. It was a first trip of a new boat, owned by a new company; and the captain was willing to set aside, for once in a way, the usual strict regulations.

The waiters were ordered to bring wine and spirits, and dishes of cakes and fruits, into the saloon; and throughout the afternoon the merriment was continued.

There was a pianoforte in the saloon, and several of the ladies played and sang, and some of the gentlemen joined in, with more or less harmonious voices, and some with voices that were far from being harmonious. Still, every endeavour to amuse and to promote friendly and kindly feeling was accepted in the spirit in which it was proffered, and everybody seemed pleased and satisfied.

The captain did not neglect me, even now. He came to me, as I sat alone on the deck, and asked me to join the party.

I declined.

Would I not at least go inside? He did not like to see me sitting out on deck alone.

Well, yes. I could scarcely refuse a request so kindly urged. I entered the saloon, and sat apart, and listened, but declined to partake of anything that was pressed upon me; and I fear that I rather diminished than increased the enjoyment of the company by my sullen presence.

At length some of the ladies suggested dancing on the deck, and the suggestion was immediately carried into effect. The pianoforte was removed to the door of the saloon. Ladies and gentlemen formed themselves into parties. Two or three ladies offered to take turns at the piano; and waltzes, and polkas, and quadrilles, and

country dances were kept up with spirit, until long after darkness had set in.

Even the sharp yet solemn-visaged, ungainly, long-limbed Western farmer, whom I had just questioned relative to the detention of the steamboat at the wharf, was at length induced to join the dance. He had his wife on board with him, it appeared—a buxom dame, fond of fun as the youngest maiden in the boat. But her husband was serious. Dancing, he declared, was folly, not proper for “hooman critturs” to indulge in.

Some apt allusions, however, to Joel's Terpsichorean achievements in the days of his youth, overcame the farmer's reluctance; and first cutting himself a huge plug of tobacco, and carefully fixing it in his cheeks, he stood up in a quadrille.

This capped the climax of the afternoon's enjoyment. To watch the way in which the old farmer flung about his long lean legs, and twisted his lanky body, and contorted his visage—striking attitudes with a most solemn expression of countenance, and never once relaxing into a smile, evidently fancying that he was exhibiting in his own person the perfection of manly grace—was sufficiently ludicrous to have brought a smile to the lips of an anchorite. Roars of laughter greeted his performance; and as he evidently regarded the laughter as a tribute of admiration, it urged him to renewed exertions, while his features still retained their solemn, saturnine expression. Despite my hunger and weariness, I laughed as heartily as any of the other lookers-on. At length the old man gave in, through very fatigue; and as darkness had long since set in, the improvised ball came to an end.

Soon afterwards the gong sounded for supper, and once more the decks and saloon were deserted for the lower cabin, and I was left alone.

I suppose the captain had grown weary of pressing me to join my fellow-passengers by this time. At all events, he did not ask me; and I sat watching the progress of the boat as she glided swiftly over the lake. There were still hopes of reaching Picton before midnight, for the wind was in favour of the steamer, and she had made rapid progress since she had quitted Toronto.

The evening was passed as before by the passengers, though most of the gentlemen and many of the ladies fell asleep soon after supper, on the sofas or in the chairs in the saloon.

At ten o'clock, as on the previous evening, the bell rang to call upon such passengers as thought proper to drink a glass of wine or grog, by way of nightcap, before they retired to their berths or state-rooms; and, as on the previous occasion, the major portion availed themselves of the invitation. The lights were put out in the saloon, and except for the lantern at her main-gaff end, and the light in the binnacle, the boat was left in darkness.

It was again a fine, clear, starlit night; but very few passengers came on deck again, after going below, to finish off the day with a cigar, and the few who did soon retired. They felt the effects of the afternoon carousal, and were all overpowered with sleep.

The last man had retired when the captain came on deck, shortly before twelve o'clock.

"Still keeping watch alone, sir?" he said, cheerfully, when he saw me. "Well, I won't press you to go to your berth to-night, for you will soon reach your destination. We shall not get in by midnight, as I hoped, though. It's near midnight now. But I will promise to set you on shore before two o'clock. It's rather an awkward time to disembark; but you'll find the hotel open."

"Do I land alone at Picton?" I inquired.

"Oh, no," replied the captain. "I have three other gentlemen bound to Picton, or rather to Prince Edward—for they don't live in the town. If I had no passengers for Picton, I should not stop at the port, for that bit of a breakdown with the new machinery has detained me behind my time; though, of course, I did not expect to keep time this first trip. New machinery always works stiffly at first.

"There, sir, you see that bluff cape, away off the boat's bow, to port? That's the peninsula of Prince Edward. Picton is at the other end of the peninsula. Port your helm! Port, my lad, port!" he called out to the helmsman, and then he left me and mounted to the bridge.

About a quarter to two o'clock, a.m., the steamer rounded the south-eastern end of the peninsula, and soon after ran up the narrow creek to the wharf at Picton. The three passengers who were to land with me had been roused from their berths, and their luggage had been got out of the store-room in readiness for them.

Just before the boat reached the wharf,

they made their appearance on the lower deck, still half asleep, yawning, and rubbing their eyes, and grumbling sorely at having arrived at such a time of night.

As the boat was only to stop while we landed from her, she was merely held to the wharf by a single rope thrown round a post, one of the crew keeping the end of the rope in his hand, ready to cast off in a moment.

Captain Baldwin came to the gangway as I was about to step on shore :—

"I'm afraid you've had little enjoyment of your voyage, sir," he said, as he shook hands with me. "It is a pity, too, on such an occasion as this. And if you miss meeting your friends through the delay, it will be worse still. I hope, however, that such will not be the case; and also that you and I will, some time or other, be shipmates again, when you will be in a better state of health; so that you will be enabled to see how we endeavour to make our passengers comfortable on board the *General Cass*."

"I hope so, captain," said I, for the captain had been so very kind and attentive, and had appeared so much grieved at my supposed illness, that I really felt grateful to him. "Good-bye, captain," I added.

"Good-bye, sir, good-bye, and better luck next time. Good-bye, gentlemen all."

We stepped on shore.

"In with the line, lads," shouted the captain. "So-o-o—that'll do. Jump aboard now. Back astern, there!"

As this last order was given, the action of the paddles was reversed, and the steamer was backing out of the harbour before we had taken half a dozen steps on the wharf.

A man from the hotel was in waiting on shore. He now came towards us.

"You'll want beds, gentlemen?" said he.

We answered in the affirmative; and, relieving us of a portion of our luggage, he led the way to the hotel—about a quarter of a mile distant.

To my surprise and disappointment, however, though the hotel was open, neither landlord nor landlady made their appearance. The bar was closed; and, with the exception of the dimly lighted coffee-room, the house was in darkness.

The porter, who had left us alone for a couple of minutes, reappeared.

"If you'll sit down in the coffee-room, gentlemen," said he, "your bed-rooms will

be ready in five minutes. I've called the chambermaid."

"Can I have supper?" I inquired, looking round at the tables, none of which had a table cloth spread. "Bread and cheese, and a glass of beer—anything will do."

"Master and missus is abed, sir, and everything's locked up. I reckon you won't git no supper at this hour o' mornin', no-how," answered the porter. "Gentlemen as lands arter ten o'clock mostly has had supper aboard the boat. We never thinks o' purwidin' for 'em."

"You've soon found your appetite, sir, on getting on shore," said one of my late fellow-passengers—all of whom were residents of the neighbourhood. "But I'm afraid the porter speaks the truth," he added. "Neither Daley nor his wife" (the landlord and landlady) "would stay up after midnight, nor turn out of their beds to provide supper for the Governor-General himself."

"It was a pity you were so unwell on board the boat, sir," said another of the party. "You'd have enjoyed yourself had it been otherwise with you. The company have behaved most liberally. They deserve to meet with success; and they couldn't have found a better captain than Captain Baldwin."

"The wine bill alone will foot up to something considerable by the time the boat gets to Montreal," said the third. "I only regret that business prevented me from going the whole trip. I should have enjoyed it amazingly."

For the first time, the thought struck me that I had possibly been too self-denying.

"Do I understand you aright," said I, "that the company to whom the boat belongs have supplied wine, free of cost, to the passengers, during this first trip?"

"Wine!" exclaimed the gentleman who had first addressed me. "Not only wine, but everything else. We were invited guests. Surely, sir, you must have been aware of that?"

"You paid your fare for the passage, at least?" said I.

"Not at all. Nobody paid a cent. Or, at least, if *you* paid, some fellow must have swindled you out of the passage money!"

I replied that I had paid four dollars for my passage to Picton.

"Then you were cheated by somebody," replied the gentleman. "Still, I don't un-

derstand how you got on board without having received an invitation."

"I got on board as I would have gone on board any other boat," said I. "I was stopping at the Jefferson Hotel, and—"

"Ah! That explains it," interrupted the gentleman. "But surely the landlord of the Jefferson gave you his card?"

"He did, and here it is. I put it in my pocket, and have never thought of it since."

I handed the card to the gentleman, who turned it over, and, glancing at the reverse side, handed it back to me, saying, with a smile—

"Just read that, sir."

I looked at the back of the card, and read—

"Admit Mr. M—— as passenger to Picton, Prince Edward.

"Signed, J. D." (The landlord's initials.)

"I never thought of showing the card," said I. "I supposed it to have been presented to me merely as a reminder, in case I should visit Lewiston again."

"You lost four dollars through not showing it," the gentleman replied, "though the fellow who took your money had no right to admit you on board without seeing your card. But you really missed a treat through your illness. I never fared so well either on board a steamboat or at an hotel, when I've had to pay for my meals; and as to the wine, there was no stint—Champagne, claret, port, sherry, whatever a passenger chose to call for, was ad libitum, and of the best."

I did not think proper to enlighten my companions as to the reason of my self-denial on board the steamer. It was sufficient to have suffered through my ignorance and bashfulness, without being laughed at into the bargain by those who had been revelling in abundance and luxury while I starved; and, when the chambermaid came to announce that the beds were ready, I left my late fellow-passengers under the impression that the motion of the steamboat had made me ill, and that I had quickly recovered on stepping on shore.

I went to bed, hungry and supperless; though at the breakfast table in the morning I made amends for my long fast, somewhat to the amusement of my late fellow-passengers, who laughed to see the numerous viands which make their appearance on a Canadian breakfast table disappear down

my throat so rapidly, and jestingly told the landlord—who looked on in amazement—that it would tend decidedly to his advantage to provide supper in future for gentlemen who landed from the boats at midnight, after having suffered from sea-sickness on board.

During the meal, I learnt, from the conversation that passed, that there had for a long time past been complaints of the high fares and other extortions of the steamboat company who had, for years, enjoyed a monopoly of the traffic on Lake Ontario, both in regard to goods and passengers; and that a new company had lately been formed, who had built the *General Cass*, and who had two other boats on the stocks, nearly completed.

This company, who were wealthy, had resolved to make a free trip of the first trial trip of the new boat, from Lewiston to Montreal; but, in order to prevent the crowd that otherwise would have taken passage in the boat, they had issued a certain limited number of invitation cards, which they had sent to their friends, and had also permitted the landlord of the Jefferson Hotel (which hotel was the property of the company) to pass such guests as happened to be stopping at the hotel when the boat started, by means of his own cards—a line to that effect, signed with his initials, having been written on the backs of these cards.

None save those who held one or other of these cards were to be admitted on board the boat on the occasion of its first trip; and I had got on board without showing my card only through the absurd fancy that had taken possession of me, that everybody suspected my impecuniosity, which had induced me indignantly to throw down my money and walk away.

To be sure, the clerk ought to have returned the money to me, and either have made me show my card or have forbidden me to go on board. But I suppose he thought one passenger more or less would make little difference; and that since he had the chance of putting four dollars in his own pocket, he might as well take advantage of it.

I might have exposed the cheat had I chosen to take the trouble; but as I had offered the temptation, and, moreover, could not have exposed the fraud without making public my own folly, I never troubled myself further about the matter.

After breakfasting at the hotel, I went to

the residence of the friend whom I had come to visit, and found, on my arrival, that the young married couple, whom I feared had already set out for New York, intended to remain at Picton for another week; so that my detention on board the steamboat—except for the inconvenience and annoyance it caused me—was of no great consequence after all; though my friends, to whom I related my misadventure, were much amused at the mauvaise honte which had induced me to half starve myself to no purpose.

AN IRISH COURT-HOUSE.

WHILST on a visit to one of the towns in the south of Ireland, a short time since, I happened one Thursday to find my way into the Court-house, and after some trouble and considerable olfactory pertinacity, I pressed through the crowd, and gained a seat where I could leisurely study the proceedings.

Little need be said about the interior of the building, save that it resembled the inside of a square box with compartments; the only attempt at ornature was a black panel stuck on the wall over the bench, having a very comical representation of the British arms upon it. No wonder, I thought, that the people have little respect for the law in this country—where outward form appeals so strongly—when the authorities typify it in such an absurd fashion. True, there was the crown—villainously like a spittoon; but where the unicorn is usually placed was something like a frantic jackass, with a bald, stumpy tail; and there where the lion should be doing the majestic, was a vile, grinning calumny on the whole feline race.

Beneath this impressive, imposing sign sat six or seven magistrates, looking as judicial as they could. With the exception of one, who seemed to be very young, they were tolerably old men—veteran half-crown finers, and dispensers of eight and forty hours' imprisonment.

A dozen or so of policemen lounged about the court, or otherwise continued to sustain their character for inaptitude and laziness. The place, though very small, was crowded to suffocation—mainly by fishermen and fisherwomen. If they had been so many stale codfish, they couldn't have been so high. The combination of odours that pervaded that court-house would have smothered

or choked any but an Irish crowd. Rank fish was the most emphatic, but bad whiskey and worse porter were very strongly accented; and these latter were hotly pressed for second place by an odd competitor—viz., hair oil, which was evidently freely used by the *ladies* present; and its most perceptible ingredient was that derived from the cod's liver.

The cases for trial were of a very trifling nature, save in one or two instances, where they involved very violent assaults. There was one attorney there—a regular fish-fag, who was employed in almost every trial. Abuse was this lawyer's forte, and his language was generally of the strongest character. If a witness had any scruples about repeating evidence containing filthy expressions, this legal scavenger roared them out at the top of his voice with evident relish and gusto.

The most amusing—though surely it was disheartening and disgraceful—feature in the scene was the conduct of the magistrates. Over every case that was brought before them they had a fight—couldn't agree as to the verdict; and it was highly humorous to hear them squabbling over what punishment they should inflict upon a prisoner for a breach of the peace.

The clerk of the court was apparently quite used to the little ways of the bench. He finally decided the amount of the fine or punishment, and the policemen did the rest. He was evidently desirous not to interfere with the law whilst it was arranging private differences on the bench, so he frequently dismissed the prisoners himself, and called a fresh case, so as to distract the attention of these local magnates for a time from their cherished disputes.

The very young magistrate was evidently at loggerheads with the chairman, and their brother-magistrates joined in whenever an opportunity occurred. The chief justice, or chairman, was a heavy, stupid man, whose only object seemed to be to put down his juvenile compeer; so the two never ceased abusing one another, much to the amusement of the public present.

The dock was pretty full, and there were two or three prisoners in it who had been remanded about three weeks before, until the magistrates could come to a decision about them; and they were put into the dock every Thursday by a thoughtful policeman, just to remind their worshippers of the case. The policemen seemed on very

familiar terms with the prisoners, and exchanged civilities with one another freely. I saw one of the civil dignitaries receive a piece of tobacco from a wretch who had been sentenced to six days' imprisonment, not half an hour before, for beating his mother with a crowbar the previous Sunday.

The following conversation takes place between a member of the dock and one of the royal constabulary. The former is leaning gracefully over the side of *his* department, and seems very much at home indeed.

Royal Constable. "Well, Mick, so you're nailed at last!"

Member of Dock. "Faix, thin, I am, Tim—'tis seven days the ould God-forsaken vagabonds giv' me."

Royal Constable. "But the fish wasn't yours, Mick; and the man's got a lump as big as a turkey egg over his right eye; and thin, perjury is getting purty stale now, anyhow."

Member of Dock (in an excited whisper). "I tould him, if he let me take the fish, I'd be as quiet as a lamb."

Royal Constable. "But the fishes was his."

Member of Dock (contemptuously). "Yerra, is it because he caught 'em?"

This was a clincher for the royal constable, who answered vaguely that it was "purpos-teros."

Let us turn to their worships. They have found, after a trial lasting nearly an hour and a half, that Moll Dwyer *did* steal three herrings from Nancy Donovan. This case seemed to excite a good deal of interest, and the two ladies appeared, one after the other, and gave their evidence in a very conversational and button-hole style. During its delivery they each in turn interpolated and interrupted one another, much in this fashion:—

Molly Dwyer. "I was down be the boat, yer lordships" (chairman nods approvingly), "when I see the fish in Patsey Maloney's boat."

Chairman remarks. "My good woman, you said boat at first; now, *do you mean boat*, or do you mean Patrick Maloney's?"

Bench echoes. "Ah, just so;" and the chairman leans over and looks at the woman sternly, as she replies—

"Patsey Maloney's, o'coorse; shure I sed it at first."

Nancy Donovan, in a whisper that echoes

round the court. "'Tis a lie, and you're a liar."

"Well, ses I, 'Plaize, mam,' ses I, just as I'm speaking to yer lordships at this moment, glory be to God."

"Who did you say that to?" inquires the Chairman, with his hand to his ear, and his face expressive of great legal cunning.

"To Nancy Donovan, o' coorse; shure I sed it."

Nancy, again. "'Tis a lie, and not wan of the family ever tould the truth."

Magistrates remark that somebody spoke. Policemen become active, and one near Nancy Donovan moves from her with a puzzled expression of face, betokening a zealous desire to discover the culprit, which he trusts the magistrates may take a note of.

Molly continues. "Ses I to this person."

Nancy. "Person, indeed! betther thin a blackguard any day."

Molly can no longer restrain herself, so she turns on Nancy, and bursts into a torrent of abuse. After a quarter of an hour they are quieted, and the young magistrate rises and says, in a very authoritative manner—

"We have heard you make a remark, Nancy Donovan, which was certainly illegal under the circumstances; and we must beg of you to utter no more of the same character, unless you are prepared to verify them by oath. I believe I am at one with my brother-magistrates on this point?"

Two assent, and go to sleep again, for it is getting late; the others entirely disagree with their junior's exposition. This is their style of argument. The young magistrate rises again—

"She must verify by oath."

He was evidently very fond of speaking about the oath, which he seemed to treat as a sort of wild animal that could only be handled in safety by a magistrate.

Chairman. "Nonsense!"

Mag. 2. "Humbug!"

Mag. 3. "Fiddlestick!"

Mag. 4. "— bad law!"

Young Mag. "I can point out the statute." And he proceeds to try and lift an enormous volume and open it, when the Chairman says—

"Great deal we care about your statutes. Why, I've got more in my head than there's in that book you're trying to lift."

Young Mag. "I protest against this language. I call upon my brother-magistrates."

Chorus of Brother Mags. "You're both wrong! There's plenty of time for law afterwards. Let us try this case now."

So Molly finishes her statement, and Nancy commences and finishes hers; and when both are thoroughly tired of libelling one another, Nancy gets the verdict, Molly pays for it, and they both leave the court with their hands hopelessly entangled in each other's hair.

TABLE TALK.

WILL some benevolent person start a subscription to raise a small fund for clothing the statue of the Prince Consort, now looking so deplorable upon the Viaduct? At present, horse and man are dressed in what looks to be a compromise between a dissipated bedgown and a set of old chintz bed curtains. It is suggested that a good "Ulcer" travelling coat would be warm and comfortable for the figure human; while the animal might be fitted with an equine suit of those well-known horse cloths, made to measure—the thick woollen checks in which horses parade for exercise at early morn. N.B.—The writer will contribute a stamp.

A SERIES OF very interesting experiments are about to be conducted by Professor Ferrier, who has been furnished with a grant by the Royal Society to enable him to conduct his examinations into the brains of monkeys. Information is not yet set afloat as to the object of the Professor, and what he expects to find in the brain of gibbon, gorilla, or chimpanzee; but it is supposed by certain wise ones that the examinations have something to do with the great milk question, and the extra penny per quart. The analysts have grown too cunning with the brains of calves, and the milkmen cannot even use water. The brain of the monkey may form an admirable substitute for the milk purveyor—bless him! But this is doubtful. It is far more likely that the Professor's experiments will have something to do with the why and the wherefore of the milk in the cocoa nut.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 312.

December 20, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER LXVI.

AN ALARM.



EDICAL skill avails little when the heart is low; but when joy lights her lamp, lighting the spirit within, the heart bounds, and life runs—races—courses—through the veins.

Slow and sluggish had Rivière's recovery been before; but now that all had been told, and man and wife were one, his progress towards convalescence was by bounds.

In a week he was up, and in another he was leaning upon his wife's arm, slowly pacing the walks in the Tuileries Gardens. In another week he had reversed the action, and Marie rested upon his arm as he took the exercise that rapidly brought him back to health and strength.

It was with no slight feeling of agitation that Rivière and his wife saw that they were recognised by Lady Lawler; and though the latter imagined that he had regarded her with what she termed a baleful look, she was wrong, for it was more one of dread, seeing how the life of the French couple had been dashed with trouble in their intercourse with the English.

"Be at rest, my child," Rivière had said to Marie, when, wild-eyed and haggard, she had afterwards confronted him at home.

"I have told you all, and you believe me?"

"Ah, yes, yes," she murmured, clinging to him.

"There shall be no more of it. We will cease going to the Gardens."

They stopped their visits there; and consequently, every search made through the alleys, morning, noon, and night, by Sir Richard Lawler, proved futile.

He was almost in despair; but he persevered, spending the whole of his time in the streets, but without success; and at the end of a fortnight, coming into his rooms, sick, jaded, and worn, he exclaimed—

"It is of no use—I must now try the police."

A couple of hours after, when rest and refreshment had somewhat restored him, he announced his intention of trying once more.

"Perseverance wins in the end, Addy," he said. And so he found it, as far as its bringing him face to face with Rivière.

It was about this time that the Frenchman and his wife were quietly walking along one of the narrow streets of the cité, when the former felt a sudden, sharp jerk at his arm, and turning, saw that Marie was looking deadly pale, and staring fixedly in one direction. Turning his head, he became aware of the cause of her excitement, for at a few yards' distance Lemaire was standing, talking earnestly to another man, perfectly unaware of their proximity.

The surprise was so great, that for a moment or two Rivière was paralyzed; but he recovered directly. He drew Marie aside, and they passed down an adjacent street.

"Don't be frightened, child," he said, quietly. "I am not going to embroil myself with him. I am now at peace with all the world."

He smiled as he spoke, and Marie was reassured.

"Time back," he said, "I should have placed other constructions upon his coming. Now I think I can safely say it has a political tendency. I learned a good deal about him over there in England, and I know that he is mixed up with the Red party. That man with the black beard was living close to us in Soho. What shall I do?"

"Oh, nothing—nothing!" exclaimed Marie. "Let us go away from here."

"With what I know," continued Rivière, not appearing to heed her words, and speaking in a curious, thoughtful fashion—"with what I know, I could denounce them as plotters against the State, have them seized for assassins, as they are, buy safety for ourselves as a reward for my efforts. The sun would shine for us once more; and Heaven! what a revenge it would be to mete out to him the same punishment that he meted to me! No—no, not the same punishment, for mine was undeserved, and his he would have earned, scoundrel, villain that he is! Did he not denounce me, an innocent man—have me torn away from my home! And my punishment—Ah! I cannot bear to think upon it—it is too much."

"Then do not think. Oh, Louis!"

"Hush, child!" he exclaimed. "Listen to me. Think what a triumph it would be to rid ourselves of him, and be avenged all at one blow! Heaven, but it would be sweet to see the villain—the cowardly, cruel villain—writhing in the arms of the law! And besides, if I do not denounce him, he will set the dogs after me, and have me dragged away once more. Lemaire—Lemaire—your time seems to have come. Denunciation—assassination—you stopped at neither to remove me from your path; and now fate has so willed it that my time has come—come in all its ripeness of maturity. Mon Dieu! I have been waiting for this, and now—"

"You will not denounce him, Louis?"

"No!" he exclaimed. "No, Marie! A thousand times, no! I am in the garb almost of a beggar—I have been cast into prison—treated as a common felon—dragged through the mire—struck—treated as a dog—but I am no thirster after blood-money—no hireling of the law. Let the scoundrel plot, and live on his villainy—Louis Rivière is a gentleman!"

"And I lost faith in you!" whispered Marie, as she knelt at her husband's feet on their return, and embraced him fondly.

"Oh, Louis, how weak are womenkind! My own, my noble husband!"

"Tut—tut—little one," he said, raising her and kissing her fondly. "I did not mean to have any more to trouble us. Let it go now. But I am troubled, little one, lest there should be some diabolical plot against the State, and I do not like to stir in the matter. But, there—let it rest to-day, and let us talk of something else, for these thoughts make my blood boil, and seem to threaten madness; whereas, after all these cares, I thirst for calm and peace."

CHAPTER LXVII.

IN A CROWD.

AT times it has seemed as if when the blackest of crimes is about to be committed Nature has put on her fairest smiles. Paris never looked so gay and cheery as one bright summer morning. It was gay enough for a fête day. Masters were in despair, for their *ouvriers* would not work. One and all they seemed disposed to prove the truth of Darwinism, by showing how man can evince a disposition to hark back to ancient animalism, and bask—bask everywhere in the sunshine. Bonnes with their charges thronged the Boulevards; a regiment of the Guard had just passed by, marching jauntily to the music of the band. Paris was not en fête, but as nearly so as was possible upon an ordinary day.

And now rumour repeated what had already been announced—namely, that the King would pass along the Boulevards on his way to the Chamber.

There were a few scowling faces, but for the most part those visible upon the pavé were bright and cheery. There were gaily dressed ladies, too, in balconies and at open windows, with scented handkerchiefs laid ready to wave as the cortège swept past.

That day, in the Rue Molière, a party of men were assembled in the back room of a mean-looking house, and, in spite of an evident struggle, pale and worn of countenance. They all wore the *ouvrier's* garb, the loose blouse; but their hands looked fine and soft, and on the finger of one, the dirtiest of the party, glittered a diamond, evidently of some worth.

"It is time," said one, who seemed to be the leader of the party. "Mind, we take

our places as we rehearsed last night. Rue de la Reine in half an hour. Gentlemen, au revoir. 'Tis for liberty!"

They went out, one at a time, each putting either a cigar or a short pipe between his lips; and a looker-on might have observed that neither the one nor the other took the trouble to light his pipe or cigar, but walked quietly on, turning it between his lips, till he turned into one of the crowded streets, and mingled with the eager spectators.

It may seem strange, but they one and all went through the crowd, apparently unmoved by its gaiety, and as if those they passed were but so many flies sporting in the sun. But then they were patriots, men of large soul, ready to risk all for their dear country's sake—for the country of their birth, the country beautiful beyond all compare in their estimation—for La France.

They passed on and were lost in the crowd, which grew thicker, brighter, and more gay, all along the line of route to be taken by his Majesty.

At the same time Sir Richard and Lady Lawler, intent as usual on their quest, became entangled in the increasing crowd before they were aware that any particular event was expected.

"Let us get a fiacre, and get out of this crowd, Richard," said Lady Lawler. "I am very tired."

"I have been looking for one during the last five minutes," he said, lightly. At the same time, though, he felt uncomfortable; for all at once he recalled being in the streets upon a similar occasion, and it was as if an icy chill had come upon him as the incidents of the past swept by in a flood of thought, painting vividly every scene and its surroundings; till, in his excitement, he pressed on, forcing his way eagerly through the crowd to get away.

"How foolish!" he said, lightly, striving hard to conceal his feelings from Lady Lawler. "I wish we had stayed at home."

"Richard," she said, suddenly, "I hope the King is not coming by here."

"Oh, no, I should think not," he said, hastily. "Some regiments on the march out of Paris. You remember, we saw one not ten minutes ago."

Lady Lawler was silenced, and they moved slowly on, every moment becoming more and more convinced that locomotion

would soon be impossible, and that they would have to stay where they were; and at last it proved so, for unless they made an attempt to force their way through a much denser portion of the crowd, further progress would be impossible.

"Richard," said Lady Lawler, in a husky voice, "I will try hard to keep up; but I am frightened. I feel faint."

"Nonsense, darling, pray be a woman. There is nothing to alarm you; see how peaceable and respectable a crowd it is."

"Yes," she whispered, looking the while ashy white—"yes, but I have a horrible dread upon me. I know it is foolish; but, Richard, I cannot help thinking of that day when—when—you know, the attempt."

"Nonsense," he said, hastily, but drawing her arm protectingly through his own. "But, keep up—such horrors as that occur but seldom in the history of a country. Don't be alarmed, it will not happen again."

"Madame looks pale," said a gaily-dressed sightseer. "The crowd makes it for her too hot. Should not monsieur lead her away?"

"To be sure, yes," said Sir Richard, eagerly; "but how?"

"Oh, but it is easy. Press on a dozen steps, and there is a court between the houses—narrow, but it leads to quiet streets. Let me show monsieur?"

The offer was gratefully accepted, with the result that, after a little good-humoured crowding and giving away, Sir Richard and Lady Lawler found themselves in a quiet little alley, walking away from the busy, chattering crowd.

"Ah!" sighed Lady Lawler, drawing a long breath, "what a relief! Oh, Richard, you will think me very foolish; but I could not help it."

"My darling," he said, smiling gravely, "here's an open confession: I was in a horrible stew myself; but I dared not avow it then for fear of fidgeting you. The burnt child fears the fire, eh?"

Lady Lawler winced.

"Not poorly now?" he said, tenderly. "There, keep up, and we shall soon be home."

They walked pretty sharply down the alley, and along a street or two; when, suddenly, Sir Richard dropped his wife's arm, and darted across the street. The next moment a horrible feeling of dread made Lady Lawler reel and lean against the

wall of the nearest house for support, for she saw her husband standing face to face with Rivière.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

AT LAST.

"**A**T last!" exclaimed Sir Richard, panting, as he caught Rivière by the arm. "At last, Sir Richard Lawler," said Rivière, calmly. "And what would you with me?"

He did not stop, but continued to walk deliberately, and heedless of the fact for the first few moments that Lady Lawler, recovering from her faintness, had, in her new-born excitement, run after them, and was at her husband's side.

"Monsieur Rivière," said Sir Richard, hoarsely, "I have stopped you suddenly, but I have sought you long."

"And for why, Sir Richard?" was the cold reply. "At our last meeting, you insulted me. I have been unjustly treated by you, and you forgot to act as should a gentleman."

The hot blood rushed into Sir Richard's face as they walked on, Lady Lawler close behind; but he forced down his anger.

"Yes," he said—"yes. Listen to me, Monsieur Rivière."

"Our paths lie far apart, Sir Richard Lawler," said Rivière. "It were better that we should say no more."

"But I would apologize," said Sir Richard. "Monsieur Rivière, I beg your pardon. I ask you as a gentleman to forgive my English rudeness, my unjust suspicions; and the cruel, cowardly way in which I behaved."

Rivière started round, with face quivering, and in an instant Sir Richard's hand would have been clasped in his; but he saw Lady Lawler, and started back with surprise.

It was but for a moment, though; the next he had raised his hat—poor, pinched, worn thing that it was—and said in trembling tones, but with dignity—

"It is enough, Sir Richard Lawler. You were mistaken—you have owned it. I do not ask you to lower yourself in the eyes of miladi by saying more. Lady Lawler, Sir Richard, our intercourse from the first has ever been unfortunate for you—for miladi here—for me and mine. From now let us never meet again. I can see peace in the future, even if I am poor. The law forgets me, and it is enough.

Marie is here. You have asked my pardon. I give it freely. And now I ask yours—pardon of both of you for many hasty words uttered when I was heart-sick, stung by misfortune, and at last by our mad encounters. You forgive me? Both?"

"Ah, yes—yes."

"It is enough. Then now adieu!"

He had half-turned to go, when Lady Lawler sprang forward, and clasped his arm.

"Oh, not yet—not yet!" she pleaded. "Monsieur Rivière, think how we have suffered! Think of me as a poor weak mother, weeping night and day for my heavy loss. You have taken a cruel revenge; you have punished us most bitterly. You say you forgive us now: then give him to me back again—let me clasp him again in my arms, and I will bless the bitter lesson that has taught me the weak, foolish woman that I was."

"Madame! Miladi!"

"Oh, Monsieur Rivière, is it not enough? Have I not suffered till I have been almost mad? Listen to me. Here! See, I go down upon my knees to you, upon these cold stones! Don't let me feel that they are harder than your heart."

"But madame—miladi—rise. It is not seemly that you should kneel to me. I—"

"Richard—Richard!" she cried, frantically, "kneel to him; he is hard and cruel, but he will relent, and give us back our boy."

"Yes, yes, Monsieur Rivière accepts my apology, and will forgive us both, Adelaide. Do as he says, get up. Pray end this scene."

"But it is for my boy I pray," sobbed Lady Lawler. "I cannot till he tells me that he will make me happy once again."

"Miladi thinks that I have her son?" said Rivière, quietly.

"Oh, yes, yes. You stole him away from us. You took him to punish us for our cruelty to you," she sobbed; "but think, pray think, what I have suffered, and give him to me back!"

"Miladi wrongs me," said Rivière, quietly. "I could not have been guilty of such an act."

"Oh, pray, pray, pray do not say that!" she almost shrieked; and evidently disbelieving his words, Sir Richard laid his hand upon Rivière's arm.

"Have you not punished us enough?" he said. "What more would you have?"

Give us back our boy. Ask what you will, I will humble myself to you as you wish, only set her poor heart at rest."

"And is Sir Richard, too, so mad as to think I could be so dastardly a scoundrel as to stoop to steal his child—that I, Louis Rivière, could perpetrate so mean and cowardly an action to gratify my hate? I tell you, I have not got your child."

Lady Lawler rose from her knees, pressed back her hair from her forehead, and gazed at him as though he had been some monster. Then, clutching his wrist in both her hands, she clung to him as he turned to go, crying wildly—

"Stop him, Richard—do not let him go. He has—he has killed our boy!"

Rivière turned sharply round to Sir Richard, saying sternly—

"Be gentle with her. She is a woman. She will see presently the folly of her words. What!" he said, seeing a strange look in Sir Richard's face, "and do you, too, believe this thing? Bah! it is absurd. I have not seen your child."

He tried, with a half angry, half pitying look upon his countenance, to loosen the tight clutch upon his wrist; but in vain, it was useless, unless he resorted to violence, and a half contemptuous air came in place of the pitying look as he held out his wrist to Sir Richard, saying calmly—

"Loose me."

Sir Richard's reply was to lay his great broad hand upon Rivière's other arm, where it closed unintentionally with a grip as of iron. A fierce anger was overmastering him, and showed in his face, but he fought it down; and when he spoke at last, it was in low, hoarse tones that he strove hard to make steady.

"Rivière, we were friends once."

"Never," said Rivière, calmly. "You always hated me in your heart."

"No, no; I was a fool!" exclaimed Sir Richard. "I was bitter and rude to you; but then I have asked your pardon. I do so again, abjectly. Can I do more? Give us back, then, our child! I do not believe you have injured it. I could not think that. No man could do that. Tell me where he is, then; if not for my sake, at least for hers. There, you will tell us, will you not?"

"I tell you that I have not had—I have not seen—your child. Is not that enough?"

"Then he had him stolen away!" cried Lady Lawler, her maternal feeling now rousing in her a fierce anger and hatred against the man she believed to be their enemy. "Richard," she said, each moment becoming more bitter and unreasonable, "he shall not leave us till we have our little one back."

"But you are mad—both mad," exclaimed Rivière, scornfully, with the opposition he was receiving breeding anger in his breast. "I tell you, I have not seen your child. Go. Loose me, both of you; and seek your child of those who stole him from you."

With a sharp wrench he tore himself away, fuming hotly, and began to stride slowly along the street; but husband and wife were close upon him again directly; and Sir Richard, maddened by the dread of losing sight of him again, while all the time he felt sure that Rivière knew something of the little one's abduction, though he would not or dared not speak, closed with him, catching his arm tightly, and speaking hastily the while—

"Monsieur Rivière, do not be angry; think how we suffer. Pray, pray listen!"

"You are a madman—you will not hear reason," said Rivière, almost scornfully.

"Yes, yes, I will," said Sir Richard; "but you know—I feel sure you know something of where our boy is taken."

"I will not speak. I will not say one word," said Rivière, hotly, though he kept his temper well under command. "You apologize to me, and tell me that you find all that I said was true; and now, when I tell you on my honour as a gentleman that I know not where your child can be, you doubt me. Now, loose my arm, and let me go."

"No, no, not yet," cried Sir Richard. "I must know where he is."

"There! do I not say you are a madman? Loose me, fool that you are! Do you not see that I am a man embittered by my fate, full of angry passions, and still you tempt me? You will madden me too, until I shall turn upon you."

He swung himself loose, and before Sir Richard could stay him, he turned and ran down a street close at hand, hotly followed by Sir Richard, who, shouting to Lady Lawler, "Stay there," disappeared in an instant.

All idea of appealing was now gone. Sir

Richard was determined to overtake and, if necessary, call in the aid of the law to enable him to secure Rivière; for now it flashed across his mind that the man he pursued was a fugitive from the State, and hence a word or two from him would send the police swiftly in pursuit of him.

"I did not want to injure him," muttered Sir Richard; "but what am I to do? He knows where the little fellow is. Good heavens, I shall lose him!"

So he exclaimed as he saw Rivière disappear round the corner at the bottom of the street. But he need not have redoubled his pace as he did, for on reaching the bottom it was to find himself in a street opening into one along which the expected cortège was to pass, so that it was thronged with spectators, and there was Rivière slowly edging himself in amongst the people on the pavé.

Hurrying on, he was soon within a few yards of Rivière; but this latter part of his progress had been slow, and on glancing round it was to find that he had been followed by Lady Lawler, who, soon after, was standing near him on the outskirts of the crowd.

He waved his hand to her to stay, but she was now as excited as he was himself; and trying to reach his side, the politeness of the French nation showed itself here, people making way to allow her to pass, so that in a short time husband and wife were once more side by side.

This achieved, though, a nearer approach to Rivière did not seem possible.

"We can at least keep him in sight," whispered Sir Richard. "I can see him quite plainly—almost touch him where he stands. The crowd will soon separate."

All thought of the past, of danger from the crowd, of present risk, was now forgotten in the one intense desire to obtain news of the little one that was lost; and Sir Richard stood watchful and eager, ready to seize upon Rivière should he get a chance.

Twice he saw Rivière look round, and he must have seen that he was watched; but he paid no heed, for he was evidently watching some one in his turn, ever and anon edging himself a little to the right, a movement imitated by Sir Richard, so as to preserve their relative distances.

The crowd here, too, was well dressed; people were laughing and chatting gaily;

many jokes were being bandied about, and more than one man jokingly offered a quiet-looking ouvrier in a blouse a light for his empty short pipe, which he held tightly between his teeth; but the only effect it had was to make the workman edge back a little, so as apparently to be out of reach of the playful badinage; so that at last he stood upon the very outskirts of the crowd, here eight or ten deep.

It was one of these allusions that had drawn Rivière's attention to the workman, and on seeing him he turned deadly pale; then the blood flushed up into his face, and the veins about his temples swelled.

This lasted but for a few moments, and though his heart had begun to throb painfully, the giddy sensation that affected him passed away, and he bent his head down to ensure that he was not observed, while his thoughts were busy.

It did not take Rivière long to collect himself, and try to think out the meaning of what he saw—Lemaire, with his face soiled, his hair rough, and in an ouvrier's blouse. There was a reason for this, and what could it be?

He was not long in associating the day with one upon which the great troubles of his life had commenced. It was horrible to think of; but a plot was afoot, and its execution due this day.

What should he do?

If he gave an alarm, the plotters would escape; and he should be arrested as a madman possibly, recognised, hurried off to a prison; and then Marie—his wife?

It was too much. He dared not attempt it. But if he did not, what then? Perhaps a score of innocent beings would be hurried unprepared before their Maker—slain by these mad enthusiasts, who perpetrated such horrors under the guise of patriotism. No, he must not give an alarm; it would only be to warn the conspirators, who would escape—and only to work mischief some other time.

He stood thinking for a few moments, and then looked round.

There must be others of the league close at hand—of that he was sure. But he was short, and his position prevented his seeing. There was Lemaire, though; and by a little skilful shifting he could get behind him, and if he were about to attempt any diabolical act, he might stop him. The crowd would help, no doubt.

He tried then cautiously to edge his way along; and by degrees he continued so to alter his position that at last he stood, unknown to Lemaire, close behind him, and so near that he could spring upon him at a moment's notice.

Rivière had been so taken up with his efforts, and the thoughts that rushed swiftly through his brain, that he did not observe that he in turn was followed, and that a minute after he had taken up his position there, where the crowd was most spare, Sir Richard Lawler and his lady had contrived to place themselves within a yard; while from where he stood to the front was a closely packed crowd, eight or ten deep, then the open roadway kept by soldiers and sergeants de ville, a similar crowd extending along the other side of the narrow street.

And there stood Lemaire, pale through the grime upon his face, his empty pipe in his lips, and one hand concealed within his blouse, grasping a steel shell, studded with detonating nipples—a diabolical missile, one of the results of Doctor D'Aulnay's chemical research and mechanical ingenuity. Room given for him to raise that hand to throw the steel ball—not bigger than that used for cricket—three, four, at the most half a dozen yards for it to fall in the open roadway, and there would be a frightful explosion: keen-edged segments of the shell would be hurled with lightning-like velocity, like a hail of death-dealing destruction, in every direction.

It was a time of horrible suspense to certain actors in that scene: to the holder of the shell, to Rivière, and to those who looked upon him as the retainer of the secret that should make happy or miserable their lives.

What was that?

A distant murmur—a buzz—now louder, growing into a cheer—the rattle of wheels, the sharp patter of horses' hoofs, the jingle of accoutrements; the cheer growing louder, seeming to roll along the street where the crowd was assembled; handkerchiefs waving, heads stretched forward, warnings uttered in gruff tones by the sergeants de ville—a wild sense of excitement on the part of the people to see that which they had seen before a score of times.

"Vive le Roi!"

"Ah! you here! For the sake of the God who made you, get back, Sir Richard—take

her back! Do you not hear me?—take her away! Fly, for your lives!"

This, hissed by Rivière in Sir Richard's ear.

"Not till we know where our child is placed," said Sir Richard, in a voice as wild as his own.

"But, mon Dieu!—do you not see? Fly for your lives! Ah!"

He gave Sir Richard Lawler a fierce thrust back, placing both his hands upon his chest, and with such violence that he staggered back against Lady Lawler, for at that moment the royal cortège came up at a rapid trot; and amidst the cheers, but heard plainly above them, rang out a keen, shrill whistle.

It was at one and the same moment that Lemaire, till then standing like a figure carved in stone, drew his hand sharply from his blouse—and Rivière, freed from Sir Richard Lawler, launched himself upon him, seizing the armed hand tightly, just as it was raised above the heads of the cheering crowd.

HIS AT LAST.

CHAPTER XV.

"Sick at heart."—*Shakspeare.*

AFTER TEA AT HEATHFIELD HALL.

"AGNES, dear, do you know what made Mr. Græme so late to-day?" said Mrs. Manning, on her niece's entrance, a few minutes after her clerical friend's departure.

"Was it not a wedding?" said Agnes, vaguely, as the word wedding kept ringing in her ears and dancing before her eyes.

"Why, who could it be? Sally Bentham is not to be married until Christmas, and Mr. Græme has not told me of any other engagement in the village. Are you sure, Agnes, it was a wedding?"

"No, I must have been mistaken. I dare say he was detained in Muggersford."

"Very likely indeed; for, now I remember, the Langranges were expecting the Dean about this time, and of course Mr. Græme would ride over to see him; but I do wonder that he did not mention it, when he knows what old friends the Dean and I are!" soliloquized Mrs. Manning.

"I suppose he had so much to say he had not time for that," said Agnes, longing

yet dreading to know if he had told her aunt of Captain Nolan's engagement.

"Yes, indeed, he had some news to tell me to-day, and I wish you had been in the room to hear it; but now you shall guess what it is."

"Mrs. Brownsmith has been picking up some of her lost h's," said Agnes, with a desperate attempt to appear cheerful.

"Nonsense, my dear, I will give you a hint—something to do with a marriage. Now, try again."

"Then Mr. Græme is going to be married."

"Well, that is not the news; but yet you are not altogether wrong, for he did mention something about himself, too."

This latter was news which frightened Agnes not a little, and, fearing what it might lead up to, caused her piteously to exclaim—

"I can never guess. Please tell me?"

"Well, my dear, Captain Nolan is going to marry Miss Brownsmith in less than a month. I must own when I heard it I was a little surprised, for the Nolans have always married into good families; but now I have had time to think it over, I consider it a most suitable alliance. She will have plenty of money to free his estate, which I hear is heavily mortgaged; besides being really a very pretty ladylike girl, who will be received everywhere; and I shall send her a wedding present at once. I cannot tell you how charmed I am at this engagement; for do you know, Agnes, that at one time I was very much afraid he had taken a fancy to you, and I am delighted to find I was mistaken, for I should not have liked it at all. No, my dear, Captain Nolan is not the man I could have trusted your happiness to. But you have not told me what you think of it?"

"I? Oh, I agree with you, aunt, in thinking it a most suitable alliance."

"I thought you would say so," said Mrs. Manning, triumphantly. "And now, my dear, I want to talk to you about that other matter you so cleverly guessed."

"What do you mean?" said Agnes, shrinking farther back into the shade.

"I am sure, Agnes," said Mrs. Manning, "you must see how devoted Mr. Græme is to you, and that it is entirely within your power to become one of the happiest women in England. It has always been a source of great sorrow to me that I could not leave

you Heathfield; but I have done my best, by saving twenty thousand pounds, to render you independent of any one, and free to remain unmarried. Still, if I knew you were going to have a husband so suited to make you happy in every respect as Mr. Græme, it would greatly relieve my mind before I die."

"You are not so ill—you are not going to die. I cannot let you go. Has not God angels enough, that he wants mine?" sobbed Agnes, giving vent to her pent-up tears.

"Hush, child. It is God's will that I should not pass many more days on this earth. And, oh! Agnes, think of Mr. Græme. Love him; let him speak to you."

"No, no, no! I can only think of—and hear you."

"Then hear me, Agnes. I know you will grieve for my loss, but let Mr. Græme fill my place in your heart. I do not ask for it now; but when I am gone—say, in two months' time—let me tell him he may come and claim you. It is the last request I shall ever make to you," pleaded Mrs. Manning, almost rising from her chair in her intense anxiety.

Agnes looked up from her dark corner of the room, and, as she saw her aunt's flushed and anxious face, a stifled "Yes" broke from her lips.

"You have made me so happy! Now I shall die in peace," murmured Mrs. Manning, sinking back in her chair.

"You have made me so miserable. I shall die of sorrow," thought Agnes, burying her face in her hands.

AFTER TEA AT ISLINGTON COURT.

While her respected parents slumbered in ample arm-chairs each side of the drawing-room fire, looking like a couple of lions couchant, finishing off the architectural beauties of the chimneypiece, the fair Julia, seated in her favourite position at Captain Nolan's feet, looked up inquiringly, and said—

"Philip, when did you begin to love me?"

"Well—really—'pon my honour, I don't know. You see, Julia, love is a kind of thing that grows on a fellow without his knowing it."

"I loved you from the moment I first saw you, when you came into the dining-room late for dinner; and I think I know when

you began to like me—it was after dinner, when you admired my flowers. You remember the water lilies?"

"Yes, charming flowers," said he, vaguely; only being able to call to his mind two dark eyes which were not those of the girl at his feet, and a thrilling air from Mozart which was not played by the hands he now held in his.

"And don't you remember—"

"My love," struck in Captain Nolan, pressing her fingers to his lips, "why bring up the past?—let us live only in the present."

"Then why did you stay so long in the dining-room after dinner, Philip?"

"You know I could not leave your father very well, all by himself, Julia."

"What did you do?"

"Do?—oh! we talked."

"What about?"

"Business affairs."

"Whose affairs, Philip?"

"My affairs—or rather, I should say, our affairs, Julia."

"But how can you have any affairs, when you have no money?"

"I do not understand you, Julia."

"Why, when papa says he has business affairs to attend to, I know he has got some more money; and I thought people who had no money could not have any business."

"You see, Julia, I am not quite such a pauper as you imagined," said he, wincing not a little at her remark; then, by way of changing the subject, asked, "What have you been doing all day?"

"Oh, I have been so busy, looking through all my drawers, and settling with mamma all the parties we are to have at Christmas. And do you know, Philip, we shall not be able to be away more than one month, for I must be at home at least a fortnight before Christmas, to issue the invitations for our dance, and see that only the right people are asked. And I tell mamma I mean to have the little blue room for my boudoir, and you are to have the old butler's pantry for your smoking-room. And we are to live here until the Red House is rebuilt. I hope, Philip, you will pull it all down, and build a nice house like this."

"My love!" exclaimed Captain Nolan, exceedingly alarmed. "Pull down the house my ancestors have lived in for centuries? I could not think of such an outrage."

"Then you like your horrid old ancestors better than me; for I know that if I sleep in any of those ghostly old rooms I shall die of fright."

"I do not mean that you should live in any of them. No; we will build an entirely new wing, exactly as you like, and you need never go into the old part of the house at all. You would like that, Julia."

"Yes; but do not you think we might live here instead?"

"Heaven forbid! thought Captain Nolan," but answered thus wily—"I am sure, Julia, you would find it much more comfortable to have a house to yourself, where you could order everything your own way, and get up and breakfast when you liked."

"Oh, yes, Philip, you are perfectly right; that would be much nicer. I did not quite like the plan when mamma proposed it; for she is always interfering, and I do not like being interfered with."

"Heaven preserve you in that goodly opinion!" inwardly ejaculated Philip; but bending down to her, said, passionately, "For God's sake, Julia, don't let your mother come between us. I will do all in my power to make you happy; and I feel sure I can do it, if we are left alone. But—"

"What are you talking about, Philip? Of course, we shall be happy; and when I am married, I mean to do as I like, and get all my bonnets from Madame Elise, instead of mamma's tiresome old dress-maker."

WITH PLIMSOLL ON BOARD THE "GREAT WESTERN."

LET me humour myself with a little prologue before I take you on board. I will tell you when I first saw Mr. Plimsoll. It was at Bristol, on Saturday, the 21st June, 1873. The citizens, at least some of them, had really opened their eyes that morning, and were walking about apparently with the full knowledge that they were doing so. It was really a difficult undertaking to get through some of the streets. I am aware that it was market day, but the crowded pavements meant something more than that, for on the busiest of market days people do not deliberately walk in Bristol streets: they wobble about in a miscellaneous manner, calmly roll round their fellow-creatures, and carefully rub each other against walls

and sides of houses ; but not altogether wilfully, for they look not at what they are doing, neither do they look at anything in particular. It would be as difficult to catch the eye of one of them as it was for the fat gentleman to catch the eye of the serpent in the menagerie. But they would come right if they had no eyes at all. They go the same rounds year after year, and they know the streets by heart. When they are wound up in the morning, you may safely leave them alone, and they will come home, unless, in the meantime, they run down and go to sleep.

To speak by the card, Bristol is a city ; but it has often reminded me of a big village that tried to be a city, and could not. On one side of the city there is a large class of people—high ; on the other side of the city there is another large class—low. One side is too rich, and the other side too poor. One half of the people have the life knocked out of them every day by hard work, and the other half by the want of it. On the one side, there is working and weeping all the year round ; on the other side, there is eating and drinking. The wealthy live on the hill, and their abiding-place is fronted with the golden pillars of Plutus. The poor exist below, and the great smoky wilderness is bounded by the iron railway of poverty ; and between the golden pillars and the iron railway is the city, with its queer, quaint houses. And there are the shopmen, too, who take sovereigns from one side of the city and pennies from the other—money in both cases. Salmon goes up the hill and herrings go down—in both cases fish, and in both cases for men and women ; “and thereby hangs a tale.”

I do not think these comparisons are out of place, for two reasons. In the first place, the very heart of Mr. Plimsoll's mission is to lessen “man's mockery of man,” and to get as good protection for the poor as for the rich ; and, in the second place, I noticed, on the Saturday morning I have mentioned, that rich Clifton, sleepy Bristol, and poor Bedminster were all represented in that crowd, anxious to see a man who simply desires to save life, and not to destroy it. When Mr. Plimsoll arrived at the station, at about half-past two, a procession was formed, headed by a brass band ; and amid badges, flowers, and flags, he was escorted round the town. Some time

after, I found myself standing between Mr. and Mrs. Plimsoll on the balcony of the White Lion Inn. It was indeed a scene of excitement. Every window was crowded, and below we saw a sea of up-turned faces, intermixed with all manner of things that had been carried by the seamen in procession. I remember there was a model of a rotten ship, marked “seaworthy ;” and I remember, too, that thousands of fingers were pointed at it in scorn, and thousands of lusty cheers were given for the man in tinted spectacles who stood beside me without his hat. He looked white and worn out. They were calling on him to speak, and he was waiting until he could make himself heard. At last, he said—“Gentlemen, I was born in Bristol (cheers), and you have made me feel to-day as if I had come home” (cheers). The band played, and Mr. Plimsoll disappeared. About five minutes afterwards he showed himself at a window above, and pointed to the model of the rotten ship. Half an hour afterwards the market people were in possession of the streets again, and wobbled about as though nothing had happened.

Mr. Plimsoll was expected to speak at the graceful dinner in connection with the Colston anniversary, on Thursday, the 13th November. He was present, but owing to sudden illness he was obliged to leave soon after the dinner, and without making a speech. It was known that on the following evening a banquet would be given to him on board the *Great Western*, and as he did not speak on the Thursday, of course his speech on the Friday became all the more important. Friday evening came, and I visited that ship seriously ; for duty took me there in the form of a journalist. I had to see, and to hear, and to faithfully recount.

I began by going a mile and a half in the wrong direction. I found myself in the New Cut at the time fixed for the banquet, and I then learned that the *Great Western* was at the Hotwells. I exercised my philosophy, and turned back without venting my spleen in idle or angry soliloquies. I engaged the first cab that came in my way. After all, I was only a few minutes late. When the cab stopped alongside the noble ship, I found the harmless vehicle surrounded by an agitated crowd. It seemed to me that they were very angry. I did not get out for a few minutes. I thought it

would be advisable to put my head through the hole in the top of the cab and propitiate the furious mob.

"Gentlemen, calm yourselves. I am favourable to Mr. Plimsoll—quite so; and as for the banquet, I have come here on purpose."

This is what I might have said, but that I felt the cabman getting down to let me out and take my fare. The crowd declared I had come, that I was there, and there I was; and then they cheered. Ah, they were friendly, after all, and not angry. They wished to pay me a compliment as a member of the great profession. I was gratified. I had never known such a manifest reception. I stepped out, and there was at once a general disappointment, which was expressed in a series of muffled groans, and some very unkind remarks, as I passed between the throng to the ship. I had been mistaken for Plimsoll! On board I saw Mr. Roger Moore, in the new Naval Reserve suit. He had a large finger in the magnificent pie, as he had in June last; and all who sympathize with the movement owe their best thanks to him. The sailors and the visitors were waiting in the dark for the guest of the evening. I amused myself by groping about the ship, stumbling over ropes, and bruising myself in various ways. The men of the Naval Reserve, with the crew of the *Great Western*, had decorated the ship bravely with bunting, in man-of-war fashion, from trucks to deck, from yard-arm to yard-arm, from masthead to masthead, bowsprit-head to masthead, and from mainmast-head to end of mainboom, with lines of flags reaching across the road.

The dinner was laid between decks, and the tables were decorated with plants. The sides of the ship were wholly obscured by flags. The seamen made some original chandeliers of iron hoops, covered with coloured paper, gold and silver foil. The capital culinary arrangements of the *Great Western* were taxed to the utmost for this dinner.

At last, Mr. Plimsoll came in his carriage. They applauded him as they had applauded me; but when he stepped out the enthusiasm was greater than before, which was not so in my case. As soon as he passed on board, the ship blazed with illumination. Rockets were fired, sailors stood at the yard-arms, holding coloured lights; and we

could see the surrounding country, and the eager faces of the enthusiastic crowd. Then the lights went out, and the huzzas, and the faces, and the ships and steeples disappeared like strange sights in a dream. Mr. and Mrs. Plimsoll, and their adopted daughter then went below, and we all followed; and once more we passed from the darkness to the light. When the men of her Majesty's navy, the men of the Reserve, and the Naval Volunteers had taken their seats, the list of the President's table was called over, and as the principal supporters passed in they were received with cheers, which ended in rounds of ringing cheers for Mr. and Mrs. Plimsoll. Jack wanted plenty of sea-room while at dinner, and it was thought advisable to serve the different courses from a table laid diagonally across the ship: and here the officers of the *Great Western*, assisted by some of the Naval Reserve, doled out the soups, fish, and viands. Some of the shell-backs were quite at sea when the soup was given them in plates. I heard a broad-shouldered representative of her Majesty's navy say to his mate, "I say, Jack, if there was a roll in the ship we should have none left."

After the soups, the decks were quickly cleared, and occasionally the phrases of gunnery cropped up in the orders, "Worm—run in, secure;" and no sooner had this order passed round than the decks were cleared of plates, and everything secured in housing position. Then another nautical command was given, and the fish went round with an alacrity which could not have been equalled by any ordinary waiters. It was done by trained men of her Majesty's navy, and the result was that everybody had everything hot. It was a pleasant thing to see the big sailors dissecting the turkey and geese on their plates. Their faces were full of anxiety, doubt, and curiosity. Everything was done to please the sailors. Even the plum puddings came in flames—not of brandy, but of rum; and when everybody had feasted enough and laughed enough, Mr. Plimsoll, replying to the toast of the evening, referred to the Christmas Number of *ONCE A WEEK*, and made the memorable speech which is familiar to newspaper readers.

Mr. Plimsoll left on the right side of midnight; but before the jolly company found in their hearts to follow his example,

the speech of the evening was in the columns of the *Times*, ready to be sent through England and all the world over.

JUST HIS DUTY.

A STORY OF THE GREAT MINNESOTA SNOWSTORM.

IT was in the year of the great Minnesota snowstorms. You heard of them, I dare say. Most people did; and I've little doubt that, to ladies and gentlemen sitting by their snug firesides in London, or even New York, there was something pleasantly exciting in the daily accounts from those far Western States in America, of how the snow kept fall, fall, falling, day by day and week by week, in one soft, steady sheet of dazzling white, till it rose high over walls and hedges, blotted out roads, and fields, and streams, and made hills and dales alike one dead, blank level. People read with eager curiosity of whole coach-loads frozen up in one night, of travellers lost in the whirling drifts within a yard or two of their own homes, of men going out to seek for stray cattle, to be found dead and stiff within an hour or so.

"There is something not altogether unpleasing in the misfortunes of others," says that cynical old Frenchman, who seems to have only lived for the sake of opening our eyes to the weaknesses and meannesses of our fellow-creatures; but, indeed, I thought he was in the right of it during those weeks of winter, while the snow kept falling in the West; and we, safe and warm under a milder sky, asked—"What news from Minnesota?" as we would have asked—"What was done in the House last night?" or—"Is Patti really engaged for St. Petersburg this season?"

Bah! one man's meat is another man's poison. Why should I grumble because men and women found a subject for harmless gossip in the snows which cost me one of the dearest lives God ever sent to flower on this decayed old world of ours?

His name was Hugh Garston, and he was the master of an infants' school half-way between Rock Rapids, Iowa, and the village of White Water Springs. Also, he was an Englishman, like myself, and an undergraduate of Exeter College, Oxford. Opposing elements, I grant you; but easily reconciled when you know his story. Hugh's father had been a gentleman of property, given to travelling in his youth; and having

rambled as far as Iowa one summer, had there fallen in love with and married a trapper's daughter.

As soon as the deed was done he became very much ashamed of it; deserted his wife as soon as possible, and returned to his ancestral halls in Yorkshire. Unfortunately, the trapper's daughter was not a person of delicacy. Instead of taking her desertion as a gentle hint that Mr. Garston was tired of her, and resigning herself accordingly, this young woman packed up a change of linen, and not only started off in pursuit of him, but actually found him in his own home; and, arriving at the hall with a fortnight-old baby in her arms, she presented the baby to the hall's master as his son.

Mr. Garston was at once a moral and a resolute man. He had determined not to place a trapper's daughter at the head of his table; and he kept to his determination. He felt the obligation of providing for his son, and did so. Threats of proving the marriage illegal, and promises of kindness to the child, were accordingly used to subdue the mother; and both succeeded to perfection. The trapper's daughter gave up her baby; and, under obligation to return to her people and trouble no one any more, was assured that Hugh should be acknowledged and provided for.

So far, so good. She went. Mr. Garston kept his word, and in due time Hugh went to college. In the latter's twentieth year, however, something occurred which turned all this good to bad. Mr. Garston had destined him for the church. Hugh declined to enter it, for the paltry reason that he did not believe in the Thirty-nine Articles which he was going to subscribe. A quarrel ensued. Unpleasant disclosures followed. Hugh learnt for the first time that his mother was not dead, but living and disowned; and that the second Mrs. Garston—(oh, yes, *she* had appeared on the scene some time back, an unexceptionable person of property and position)—owed her marriage to a lucky and legal flaw in the first ceremony.

Passion is productive of hasty words. Wise men pay no heed to them. Hugh was not wise. Within a week he had thrown up father, college, and prospects; and departed to seek his mother in the far West. Please to remember his trapper blood in excuse, and excuse him—as I did.

When I next met him it was out there, and he was returning from his mother's

funeral. He had found her living alone in a small house on the hills, keeping a small school, and suffering from a lingering internal disorder which made life one long torture to her. Hugh brought the best medicine that torture could admit—his presence and his love; and under that gentle balm Mary Garston lingered two years, resting from her labours in peace and happiness, while the young Oxonian kept school and house for her, and tended her like nurse, servant, and son in one.

Naturally, now she was gone, I urged him to give up this wretched life, and begin a better in England, with my aid. He thanked me, and declined. He liked teaching. The school had increased, and was a blessing to those outlying farms and cabins, whose young fry would otherwise have grown up mere heathens and savages. If he gave it up, no other would take it, the pay was so poor and the situation so lonely. Besides, he was now bent on the Independent ministry, and found this a capital place for perfecting his studies in quiet, and practising their lessons in freedom. These were his arguments, and I combated them with ease. Then he turned on me, and told me—

"I have grown to care for a girl in the village yonder, Malva Keith. She is not a lady, and I am not a gentleman—after my father's pattern, at least. This state of life suits her better than any other; therefore, if I marry her, it and no other shall suit me."

I had used reason against arguments, and turned them into smoke. To use reason against love would have been folly; and I was not a fool. We shook hands heartily, bade each other "God speed," and parted the best of friends, never to meet again in this world. The rest of Hugh's story I give from his letters and Malva's lips.

She was a practised coquette, honest enough in her way, and beautiful beyond measure, with the full, upright figure, lithe, round limbs, and rich colouring of a prairie Hebe: well aware of her beauty too, both from her glass and the more audible homage of at least a score of rough and ready admirers, trappers, timber-fellers, railway employés, loafers, and the like, who all vied in paying court to the flower of White Waters. Hugh came in among these like a star from another system; and straightway Malva cast off her old suitors, and hauled down the flag of freedom to lay it at the young schoolmaster's feet.

So far, so well; but, unfortunately, surrender was easier than subjection to this young lady. Hugh lived fully three miles off, and was at his work all day. Malva lived just outside the village—her father was a timber contractor, and a well-to-do man of the roughest class—and the house was always full of those of her swains as did not care for work, and found making love a pleasant pastime; and Malva was too partial to this incense to relinquish it at once, and for the sake of a grave, stern young man, who had other work than hanging on her apron-strings all day. The end of all this was that Hugh grew anxious, then jealous, then angry; took to reproving instead of worshiping, and so irritated Malva's pride; all of which culminated in a desperate quarrel on Christmas Eve respecting a certain Miles Pearson, whose over-familiar worship of the flower of White Waters had for some time been arousing Master Hugh's wrath. I fear that latter gentleman had inherited his father's pride; at any rate, he bore himself so sternly on this occasion that Malva, who was on the point of yielding and asking pardon, suddenly nailed her colours to the mast, and said she "wasn't going to be bullied. Miles was as good as *some* folk, and better. He didn't get riley and tyrannical; and for her part she preferred Americans to half-bred foreigners," &c., &c., blue eyes flashing and pomegranate cheeks aflame. Hugh looked her full in the face, and answered her, very white and cold—

"That is your choice then? Very well. The half-bred foreigner will resign you until such time as you change your mind, and *ask* him to come back. Good morning, Miss Keith."

And so walked back to his school, and came no more to Keith's homestead.

This was Christmas Eve, as I said, and the weather was cold enough then; but the real heavy snow did not set in much before January. It had been falling off and on for several days, and was so deep in places that Hugh's school benches had grown very empty, many from the more distant clearings not being able to come. Still, the master was a great favourite with children, and these in Iowa and Minnesota are a tough and hardy little race; so on the 5th of January, 187—, though the sky was an ominous colour, and the barometer falling fast, about nine boys and girls arrived as usual, and,

after a good warming at the fire, began their studies.

One of them, Seth Halkett, brought a bit of news.

"Miles Pearson's gwine to splice with old Keith's gal. Guess there'll be grand fixings down to her place. Air you a-gwine to the marryin', teacher?"

"You shut up, Seth," cried his sister, a sharp girl of twelve, who, with precocious womanhood, had got hold of Hugh's feelings in that quarter. "He's always talkin' when he knows nuthin', teacher; an' he aren't done one figger of his reck'nin' yet."

Seth stuck his hand defiantly in the ragged bands of his corduroys, and muttered—"Darn the reck'nin'"; but Hugh spoke to him mildly, and bade the girl mind her own work. It was not with children that his sternness came out.

And the snow went on falling.

It soon grew too dark for studying. The flakes froze as they fell in a solid heap on the window-sill, and blotted out the light. One of the boys looked out at the front door, and got his nose frost-bitten; and a murmur rose that they would be obliged to stay in school all night. Hugh went to the back door, which was at the lee of the house, and confirmed the foreboding. The road was impassable for children already, and the snow falling in two cross currents, which made a sort of frozen whirlwind in the air. There could be no going home that evening; and he busied himself in piling up the fires, and helping the old negress, who waited on him to get supper ready for his pupils. That night, the two girls who had been plucky enough to accompany their brothers to school slept in Hugh's bed, while he camped down with the boys in the school-room. They kept roaring fires, and used every wrap there was in the house; but the cold increased hourly, and one, the youngest child, woke crying more than once.

And the snow went on falling.

It never ceased all the next day and night. Hugh kept up the fires, fed the children well, and told them stories. Little Tommy, the youngest, cried for his mother at first; but soon ceased when the master took him on his knee and comforted him. Still, the time passed very drearily; every peep from the back room showed only a white waste of snow, trending downwards to the valley, and blotting paths, fences, and landmarks in one huge winding-sheet. Worse was coming

still; for that night old Cassy whispered her master that the food was almost gone. Nine hungry mouths soon make away with the contents of one man's larder.

And the snow went on falling.

On the following day breakfast was a miserable meal, and one of the girls having discovered the cause thereof, began to wail out that they would all be starved. Hugh quieted her, gently but firmly, and going to the window pointed that the sky was clearing, and the snow-flakes falling less thickly. They continued to lessen hour by hour; and by noon Hugh determined to make his way to the nearest village store, and bring back food to the hungry children.

It was a difficult errand, even for him, who knew every inch of the way, and was cased in fur and leather from head to foot. All signs of the road were obliterated. More than once he missed his way, and sank in the snow nearly to his thighs; and the cold was so intense that the very breath froze upon his lips like an icy skin. The poor fellow was well-nigh dead when he at last reached Ethan Ball's store—a log ranch, sunk deep in snow, on the outskirts of the village; and Mrs. Ball, whose two boys were both at school, half choked him with a tumblerful of raw brandy, which she tried to pour down his throat, in her anxiety to learn the fate of the children.

The spirit did him good, however; and seeing that the sky looked very threatening, he would not even linger long in the grateful warmth, but loaded a small hand-sled with brandy, biscuits, and beef, and set off again—refusing to allow Ball, a sickly, rheumatic man, to accompany him. This husband and wife, who had never said a prayer in their lives, and only knew the name of their Maker by way of a lively curse or two, braved the cold at the open door to cry "God keep you, man," as Hugh started on his errand of aid to the children on the hill.

I think He did—though not in their sense.

Only a light sprinkling of snow had fallen since his departure; so that he was able to retrace the journey by his own track, and was toiling heavily up a steepish hill, when, of a sudden, his car was caught by the dismal howling of a dog far away. He paid no heed, thinking it came from the settlement; and presently it ceased, then changed to a bark, growing nearer and nearer; till finally, a large black dog came in sight round

a point of rock, and, bounding upon him, began a series of fawning and whining, running away a few steps, and returning to look up in his face with all a dog's frenzy of impotent eloquence. Men soon grow to understand these signs in the far West. Hugh knew, as well as if he had been told, that somewhere within hail that dog's master was lying in strait so great as to need help; and help accordingly he set out to give. The dog led the way, and he followed; now stumbling, now falling outright; sometimes letting the handle of the sled slip from his half-frozen fingers, and often determining to give up the attempt and get home while he could; but always urged on, as much by that inflexibility which made part of the man's character as by dislike of leaving a fellow-creature to perish within reach. So on and on, for half a mile or so; and then the dog stopped beside a big, motionless mound of snow, and Hugh, bending forward, found himself staring into the white and rigid face of his old enemy, Miles Pearson.

Independent of rivalry, this man had always been peculiarly obnoxious to Hugh. He was a big, burly fellow, foul in his tongue and loose in his living, with a rooted hatred to "Britishers"—which he took every occasion of testifying by the coarsest offence which could be conveyed into words and manner—and an amount of brutal good looks and flash attire, which found him favour with the White Waters women, and were more offensive to Garston than any insults. That such a man should dare to admire Malva Keith, and not be repulsed with loathing, had certainly lowered that young lady in her lover's eyes; and of late the two men had hardly even met without exhibiting a manifest animosity, which White Waters, looking on with cheerful anticipation, predicted would soon "end in shooting." Pearson was a dead bullet within a hundred yards, and had killed his man before. White Waters considered it safe to lay ten to two against the schoolmaster, and waited rather impatiently for an opportunity to "realize."

Now, Pearson lay a half-frozen, insensible log upon the Minnesota snows; and Hugh Garston stood above him!

Only for a moment; then he knelt down and felt the man's wrist. It gave back no answering beat. He laid his hand on his heart; that still ticked on, but very feebly. Death was running a race with Miles Pearson, and no time could be lost if he were

to be beaten. Hugh lost none. Without a moment's hesitation, he set to work to force some drops of brandy down the man's throat; then jerked the bags of food out of the sled, and half dragged, half lifted the helpless body on to it instead. The children were very hungry, but *they* could wait. Miles was past waiting. But, not to lose the food, he drove the long stick with which he had been walking into the frozen snow, and fastened the dog to him. He had got out of the way, he knew, and was far from home; but that would mark the spot. And now he looked round, half despairingly, for some nearer shelter, and straightway uttered a shout of joy. A spiral column of smoke was rising into the air, beside a huge grey bluff, about half a mile off; and Hugh's heart beat thankfully as he recognized the chimneys of Keith's homestead.

As he started to reach it the snow began to fall.

In the great log kitchen at the Keiths', the family were all gathered round a huge fire that afternoon, talking of the snow, of the time it had lasted and the casualties it had occasioned, and wondering when fine weather would set in again. Abram Keith had heard of a Minnesota bride and bridegroom snowed-up in the sleigh, en route to their married home, and only rescued after two days—living, but crippled for life; and his father told of a neighbour found dead and frozen stiff, within a few yards of his house, that very morning. There was no end of such stories. Only Malva held her tongue, and looked pale and weary. Possibly she had begun to miss Hugh Garston.

A heavy bang at the door startled them all; and Abram, going to open it, gave vent to such a volley of oaths and ejaculations of wonder as brought all the family to his side, and turned the solo to a chorus. No wonder, for what had entered was the body of a man, feet foremost, laid on a sled; and propelled by another man, who, as if utterly exhausted, dropped his burden at the door, and staggered to a bench, without uttering one word in reply to the questions which assailed him. No heed was paid to him, however, for all eyes had turned upon the apparent corpse; and there was another shout from Abram.

"Jeehosophat and all his tarnation grand-uncles, ef 'taint Miles Pearson!"

The whole house was in a commotion at

once. Brandy and hot blankets were called for, Miles was put into Abram's bed; and every one was so busy in attending to his restoration, that Hugh had stumbled to the fire, helped himself to a drink of hot coffee, and turned to the door again, before any one noticed him. Then Mrs. Keith cried out—

"Garston, don't open that, man; or you'll let more of the cold in."

"I will shut it behind me," he said, laconically.

"Why, what the fury!—you're not going?" in a chorus from the men.

"Yes, I am—home."

Abram delivered himself of a whole bagful of curses, ingeniously diversified. Malva came close, and put her hand wonderingly on her lover's arm. Hugh did not look at her; but turning to his host, stated the reason for his departure—nine famishing children.

"What! out there? Why I reckoned you were coming down here till the thaw. Where did you spot poor Miles, then?"

Hugh told.

"An' you left the prog, and come away to toat him along down here! Well, I'm darned!"

Old Keith shrugged his shoulders; but Malva's eyes glistened, and her warm fingers stole down his arm, and glided sinuously into his gloved ones.

"Garston," said old Keith, giving up the past idiocy for the present—"it's most dark already, an' the snow falling like wildfire. You'll never get home with your life this day. Don't be a darned fool, an' risk it."

"And my children?"

"Dodrot the shavers! If they've empty bellies one day, they can fill 'em the next, an' no harm done, I reckon. Let 'em be. Why, you're most broke down a'ready, an' as white as a skunk's liver."

This from Abram. Hugh looked at him coldly.

These two young men did not "hitch well," to use Malva's phrase.

"Will you go if I stay?" he asked; "or will you come with me and help?"

With the greatest sincerity, young Keith shook his head, and wished himself at eternal perdition if he were such a fool—

"*Hed* keer fur his life, he guessed, ef schoolmaster didn't fur his'n."

The schoolmaster laughed contemptuously.

"I thought so. Good night, friends. I care for the children given to my charge.

Look after your frost-bitten friend, Abram. You can do that without running the risk of losing your precious life, or freezing your foul tongue either."

He went out as he spoke, and Abram, boiling with rage, caught up a "Colt's," and made as he would follow. Old Keith held him back.

"Let the darned fool go, and be 'cussed to him!" he said. "Look at the snow, boy. He'll never spot home to-night. Malva, bolt the door."

She flew off; but not to obey. Hugh had taken but a few steps, when his arm was caught, and Malva, half buried in her father's huge bearskin robe, clung panting to his side.

"Hugh, dear Hugh, do come back! Why, for pity's sake, do you flare at Abram so? He only wanted to stay you. Come back, do!"

"I beg your pardon, Malva. Your brother always irritates me; but his selfish cowardice just now put my blood up. Go back yourself, child. It isn't safe for you to be here a moment."

He put her back as he spoke, pressing her into the shelter of the deep porch, and wrapping the mufflers still closer round her. She got one arm free, however, and flung it round his neck.

"Hugh, don't you now—don't! Look at the snow, it's falling fast again; an' dusk's drawing in. Don't go to-night, Hugh—for my sake, don't! Listen"—trying to rub her soft cheek against his caressingly—"I love you—I love you better nor any one; an' I'll never speak another word to that drunken brute you saved, nor no one if you bid me—never, Hugh! Do forgive me, old man! Say you believe me, and stay to-night—do!"

She was sobbing and crying now, with her wet, flushed face hidden on his breast, and her warm, shapely arms clasped and quivering about his neck. The proprieties of courtship are not a matter of education in the North-Western States. Hugh lifted her face and kissed it.

"I do forgive you," he said. "I would make you my wife to-night if I could, and I believe you would come."

"That I would, old man, right away."

"Do your duty, then, child; and obey me like one. Mine is to go to those children this very minute, and I must do it. There," unclasping her hands, and kissing both them and the trembling lips with long, grave

kisses—"God bless you, love, and good-bye. I've delayed over long already."

He opened the door for her, and strode away into the driving snow, without waiting for an answer. She walked heavily into the house, put up the bolts, and, dropping down into a seat, hid her face in her apron, weeping bitterly.

And the snow went on falling.

It never ceased all that night and the following morning; but towards evening the sky cleared, the barometer rose steadily, and two of the children's fathers from the village found their way to the school-house on the hill. The drifts had blocked up the front door and windows, but the back was still clear; and at the sound of their voices, half a dozen little faces, white, gaunt and haggard-looking, appeared in the open doorway, clamouring for food.

"Thank the Lord, mine are safe!" Jim Halkett said, griping his son's hand, while his other arm held the sobbing girl. "Why, where's schoolmaster, my kids; an' what's gone wi' Nathan's little Tommy?"

"Teacher went away to get somethin' t' eat yesterday mornin', an' never come back," Seth said; "an' Tommy, he tuk bad an' died last night. Guess he were so hungry he couldn't wait. We're most dead wi' hunger, father."

Jim had brought a bagful of bread-stuff, on the chance of such need. He hastened now to divide it among the sick and famished children, while Tommy's father went into the back room, where the little white body lay, cold and quiet—not hungry now. Old Cassy stood beside him.

"He did nothing but cry," she said, "after de massa went, till he took sick; an' den he quiet bery soon. He'd been a lyin' still, mout be a couple o' hours, when all of a sudden he skeered right up, his little face all smilin', an' cries out, 'Teacher's comin'! I see him walkin' up de hill, aside of a man all white an' shinin'. Oh, let me go! He's holdin' out his hands to me. Let me go!' Dem was his bery last words, massa. He went off slick that minnit, and ef you ask my 'pinion, Massa Garston went fust. He'd never ha' stayed away from these 'ere blessed children ef the snow hadn't caught him."

She said truly. Two days later, a man and woman, starting from Keith's homestead for the school, found his body half covered with snow, and lying within a dozen yards

of the stick, where the dog, stark and stiff too, crouched guardian-like upon the heap of now useless provisions. He must have lost his way in the blinding drift, and wandered round and round in circles, till he dropped from sheer exhaustion; for there were marks of his footsteps still visible, crossing and recrossing each other in every direction. But the face was quite peaceful; and on the stern lips there still lay a smile, frozen there by the icy hand of Death, before he rose up to meet the Man whose dazzling whiteness is beyond that of all snows—yea, even of the sun and stars. And even in dying he had tried to carry out that task which, unfulfilled, had troubled his last moments; for one rigid hand still grasped an end of pencil, while beside him lay the pocket-book, in which the poor frozen fingers had scrawled—

"Food—to the children—*Quick!*"

That strong right hand must have grown strangely dead; for the letters were all but illegible.

But what will you? He had done his best. Which of you will do more?

AN OCEAN PALACE.

"CÆLUM, non animum, mutant, qui trans mare currunt," said the most graceful and reflective of ancient satirists; but, in spite of the depreciatory axiom of the Augustan man-about-town, whose yearly tour extended only from the Via Sacra to his snug little Sabine farm, a wide range of travel is better than the erudition of a dozen libraries. Bradshaw and Murray are the real gradus and lexicon of the future, and the true "terminal examination" is an examination of luggage at Ostend, or Oporto, or Cronstadt. There is no civilizer like your railroad. Travel, more than anything else upon earth, has disabused us of the countless prejudices of our ancestors—has taught us that there are great capitals beside London, noble harbours beside Plymouth and Southampton, mountains grander than Snowdon or Helvellyn, buildings finer than St. Paul's; that the French are not the meagre frog-eaters that our fancy painted them; that there are other things in Germany besides beer and tobacco; that Dutchmen may be refined, Italians honest; that the Swiss do not, as a rule, spend their life in posturing upon

needle-like mountain tops, waving the national flag in one hand, and applying bottles to their mouths with the other; that the great Muscovite empire is not, after all, that abnormal phantasmagoria of sledges, spies, caviare, prisons, fur coats, flogging to death, perpetual winter, an omniscient police, and a passionate love of eating candles, which the word "Russia" used to call up quite naturally in the mind of every Englishman; and that, finally (as I had just discovered on paying them a visit), there are many sights in Orkney and Shetland beside the traditional spectacle of a precipice six hundred feet in height, mathematically smooth and regular, on the face of which a fantastically attired man is amusing himself by an apparently purposeless see-saw at the end of a rope, with one eagle staring vacantly in his face, and another picking the buttons off his coat behind.

Somewhat after this fashion might I have moralized, while awaiting my two boatmen on a little wooden landing-stage that overlooked the Sound of Lerwick, with the narrow breakneck streets of the little metropolis of Shetland winding along the curving shore to right and left, in all their quaint and picturesque irregularity. To call the architecture of Lerwick merely *irregular*, is a sad injustice to the splendid original, which might fairly serve as an illustration of the atheistical theory that all things come together by *accident*. In order to represent it, take a surface drain of unusual sinuosity, which line with a number of stone cocked hats, supposed to resemble houses; this being the main street, let into it, from the hill above, some dozen minor drains, at an angle of 45, with a smaller range of cocked hats in attendance; balance twenty or thirty more of these latter on every available strip of beach, scattering a handful of boats around them; then pull a string and let in the rain or snow to half fill the drains aforesaid—and the product shall be the thing required.

At this point my reflections are suddenly broken by the voices of my expected comrades, who come shambling over the uneven stones, side by side, exchanging shots of rough repartee in that racy northern vernacular to which the author of "Alec Forbes" has done such ample justice.

"I'll tell ye what, Hay, ma laddie—gin ye hadna ta'en sae muckle whiskey yestreen, ye wadna hae lain snorin' sa lang the day!"

"Lordsake, man Peter, haud yer tongue, and dinna gar my teeth rasp. Ye hae a voice like ane sharpenin' a scythe wi' a bad stane!"

My crew, as they halt at the landing-place to receive their orders, make a very picturesque group. Hay Blance, the younger of the twain, is a little, well-shaped fellow, of twenty-eight to thirty years old, with a remarkably fair complexion for a sailor, and a frank, handsome, good-humoured face, to which his short, curly whiskers and brand-new tarpaulin hat give quite a jaunty air. His companion, Peter Nisbet, is a grim old whaler, roughened and battered by every extreme of weather, and wearing on his set lips and lowering brow the indelible impress of that dogged, unflinching, "hard-bitten" look characteristic of a man accustomed to stand face to face with deadly peril—the look worn by John Bull when fighting his way seaward against a fierce north-easter, or *axing* his road up the last arête of a hitherto untouched peak, or "standing up to" some Heenan a head taller than himself. A little behind them stand the two "helps"—a brace of ruddy-faced, black-eyed, shock-headed little imps, agile as panthers, fearless as lions, tireless and untameable as Siberian wolves; the very perfection of young savages, who might have served Sir Walter Scott as the model of his "Whistler" and his Kenneth MacEagh, and who, only a day before, had run races with me along the brink of the most tremendous precipice in the island, and amused themselves by kicking stones from the brow of the cliff into the chafing sea, six hundred feet below, with a steadiness of head which all my practice in the Valais and Oberland could not enable me to rival.

We were soon afloat, and enjoying in all its fulness a view which the vaunted regions of Southern Europe would find it hard to equal, and which appears to special advantage under the exceptionally fine weather which attends our cruise. For it is but seldom, at this early season, that the grim climate of the northern seas shows much complaisance to its unasked visitors. The North is essentially a region of storms; and the bare, bleak hills, unrelieved by a single oasis of foliage, seem the fit pathway of a charging hurricane, or a brattling burst of hail. The treeless uplands, swathed in snow; the flat, desolate shores; the black,

sailless sea; the pale, chilly blue sky, which has all the cold clearness of an eye without mercy—all produce an impression which is hard to describe; perhaps I can best convey it by calling it "the feeling of a living man in a dead world." With these wild regions the stormy days of early spring have a harmony which is lost as the summer advances. Few sights are grander than the sudden bursting of the northern storm. First comes an ominous moaning through the still air, and a deepening gloom all around, like the shadow of some mighty banner; then, in one moment, the squall is let loose. Black clouds whirl across the sky, casting a dismal shadow on the dark-green ocean, flecked with livid foam; the dimness of the horizon gives a look of infinity to the vast slopes of grey hillside which fill up the view; and, half seen through the driving storm, loom the shores of the distant islands, like newly created worlds slowly rising into being. The whole air is filled with the sound of the gale, like the rush of a charging squadron; while in grim treble and bass join the sharp musketry of the pattering hail, and the deep booming cannonade of the waves upon the cliffs below.

Of such storms I had already seen more than a few; but the morning of our cruise, by good fortune, is exceptionally fine—a morning which would have made Tacitus himself recant his terse and trenchant condemnation of "Ultima Thule," and long for a sail on the "mare pigrum et difficile," over which we are now gliding so easily. On one side of us lie the green sloping shores of Mainland (buttressed here and there by vast pillars of rock), and the small irregular houses and winding streets of Lerwick; behind which rises ring after ring of dark purple hills, cut sharp and clear against the bright morning sky. On the other side, beyond the dancing ripples of the deep blue Sound, tower the mighty cliffs of Bressa, sprinkled with new-fallen snow, and sloping down every here and there, to form a smooth, land-locked basin, on the surface of which hovers a tiny boat.

Along the summit of those cliffs I had marched the day before with my two "young savages." I had watched the little native mills, no larger than a good-sized sewing machine, grinding *one* sack of corn at a time. I had seen the rabbits scurry over the purple heather, and the sea birds rush clanging and screaming from the cran-

nies of the rock; and the quaint little Shetland ponies, with their trailing manes and solemn faces, scampering about like children at play; I had crossed the narrow firth beyond which lies the islet of Noss (tenanted only by a stalwart shepherd and his rough collie dog), and stood on the brow of a precipice which, for colossal grandeur of outline and fantastic richness of colouring, might vie with the summit of the Matterhorn. But I was now to see this great fortress of nature under a different aspect—not from above, but from below.

As we round the southern headland, and come fairly out into the open sea, with the inaccessible cliff, smooth as if ruled by a plumb-line, on one side of us, and the boundless expanse of the northern seas on the other, my oarsmen become suddenly silent, and bend to their work with redoubled vigour. It needs no warning to remind us that, should the wind rise while we are here, our lives are not worth a moment's purchase. Between sinking in a fathomless sea, and being dashed to pieces against an unscalable precipice, there is but little choice; and such is the only alternative left to the boatman who is overtaken by a stiff breeze off the southern promontory of Bressa. And, apart from all sense of danger, there is something in the aspect of this great rampart of God's building sufficient to make any one silent and thoughtful. In the far North, everything is grim, rugged, gigantic—a fitting theatre for the wild, rough-hewn, Titanic shapes of the old Scandinavian mythology.

One can imagine, looking at the stern and silent grandeur of that mighty bulwark, how the unchecked fancy of the Norseman would have personified this tremendous passivity, against which all the energies of man are as nothing. It needs little stretch of imagination to picture to oneself Hymir, the Frost Giant, enthroned on yonder towering headland, "gathering all the mists of heaven" with his icy breath; and red-bearded Thor, erect on this jutting crag, smiting the rocks asunder with his terrible hammer. That dark projection far up against the sky, which looks like a distorted human figure, may well be the fettered Loki, writhing as the burning venom drips from his upturned face; and these long, smooth, undulating wavelets, which rock our boat to and fro, may spring from the

coils of Jormungand, the Earth Snake, weltering in the fathomless depths below.

We have skirted the great wall for twenty minutes in profound silence, when I at length decide upon attempting to arouse Peter (who, as a rule, never speaks a word when he has got work in hand) from his habitual taciturnity. I lean forward from my seat in the stern, and address him.

"I say, Peter, have you heard that story of how the folks in the Fair Isle* were still praying for George the Third in the time of William the Fourth?"

This first shot is a dead failure; the stoical Peter works away as impassibly as the bronze ferryman in the Arabian Nights.

"Peter," venture I again, after a short silence, "is it true that a pirate once ravaged all Shetland from north to south, getting only one pound Scots" (1s. 8d. English) "for his trouble, and that he was so angry, that he swore never to come back again?"

Hay Blance gives a mischievous chuckle behind his comrade's back; but Peter's granite-hewn visage remains unmoved.

"Peter," begin I for the third time, determined to strike fire out of this flint, "suppose the wind were to get up—what would happen then?"

This last question touches the old whaler in the right place. Such a monstrous admission of inexperience must not be suffered to pass unrebuked. Lifting his eyes for a moment from his oar, he surveys me with a look almost too pitying for contempt—the look with which one might hear a child ask why it might not set fire to a powder magazine—and then answers, in a slow, measured voice, as if reading from a spelling-book—

"Gin—the—wind—get—up, we'll—a'—be—at—the bottom—in—five—minutes."

The old man's tone, and gesture, and look, cannot be conveyed in words; and, in spite of all my efforts to be grave, they make me laugh till I am fairly exhausted. Hay and the two "callants" follow my example; while Peter, amid our uproar and merriment, sits—

"Like Teneriffe or Atlas unremoved,"

to all appearance wholly unconscious that he is himself the cause of our amusement.

Meanwhile the sun rises higher and

higher, lighting up the landscape far and wide; and, as we look back, we see the widening shores of Mainland outspread before us in an ever-varying panorama—tiny creeks, bold headlands, smooth sandy reaches, spray-lashed rocks, purple ridges, and green slopes dotted with browsing sheep. Hay Blance, more loquacious than his stoical comrade, takes upon himself to point out to me in detail all the noteworthy points of the scenery, running through the whole repertoire of those antiquated terms familiarized to us by Sir Walter Scott's "Pirate,"* and with which Troid the Dwarf so plentifully seasoned his address to Norna of the Fitful-Head, when he endowed her with power—

"By stack and by skerry, by noup and by voe,
By air and by wick, and by helier and gio."

For there is still a strong flavour of Denmark about these quaint little relics of her former power; and though the racy Northern tongue, which still reigns supreme in Greenland and the Faroe Islands, exists no longer as a spoken language among the Orkney-men and Shetlanders, it has bequeathed them many of the commonest words of their everyday speech.

In the midst of our conversation, we shoot suddenly round a projecting crag, and find ourselves in front of a vast shadowy archway, like some portal of the nether world, in the deeper gloom of which, the green, translucent water looks black and dismal. Through such a gateway the shades of the champions who fell before Troy may have flitted upward to greet their old brother-in-arms, as he stood silently by the edge of the "black trench." Over such a porch Dante may have read the fatal inscription that forbade hope to all who entered there. And amid the tomb-like shadows of the interior the student of Victor Hugo might picture to himself, with little effort of imagination, stout-hearted Gilliatt struggling in the slimy coils of the "pieuvre," and the skeleton of Clubin looking forth, with its ghastly and unchanging grin, from the tangled folds of the many-coloured seaweed.

* This famous romance is still an especial favourite in the northern archipelago. In the single bookshop possessed by Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney, I saw at least five copies of the "Pirate" for one of any other novel; and even those who know it well like nothing better (as I found on visiting Westra, one of the remoter islands) than a chance of reading it again.

*A rocky islet, midway between Orkney and Shetland.

One powerful stroke carries us into the cavern; and, standing up in the boat, I gaze around me with admiring astonishment. The sculpture-like curve of the archway, the groined vaulting of the lofty roof, the pillared masses of rock which stand forth to right and to left, are all suggestive of some splendid triumph of human art, although no stroke of hammer or chisel has profaned this great cathedral of nature since the world began. But, glorious though it is, this ocean palace must be merely the vestibule of what we have come to see; and it is far too small for the famous Cave of Bressa, of which we have heard so much. And where, then, is the entrance of the cave itself? Round and round, look which way I will, extends the same smooth, impenetrable wall of black shining rock, seeming as if, like the secret haunt of the Forty Thieves, or the island palace of Monte Cristo, it could be opened by neither spring nor lever, but only by the pronunciation of a magic word. While I am still wondering, my meditations are suddenly broken in upon by the saw-like voice of Peter the whaler.

"I'll be gettin' ready the licht, I'm thinkin'; and ye, mon Hay, tak' ye the boat-hook, and look that ye dinna coup us ower."

And so saying, the veteran fishes up from the bottom of the boat a huge splinter of resinous firewood, bound round at one end with a linen rag steeped in spirits, while at the same moment Hay's boat-hook grates against the rock, and the boat plunges forward. The sudden glare of Peter's extempore flambeau forces me to close my eyes for a moment; and when I reopen them, the sudden change of scene is perfectly bewildering. We are, indeed, in a fairy palace, on the wonders of which Aladdin himself might have gazed admiringly. Our boat lies within the mouth of a long, narrow corridor, the roof of which is resplendent with all the glories of earthly colouring—green, blue, red, lilac—in dazzling and limitless profusion; while the polished walls glow like refined gold under the increasing light, and beneath rolls and gurgles the un-resting sea—now dyed into a deep crimson by the fierce red glare of our crackling torch. My boatmen, often as they have seen it before, gaze upon the marvellous spectacle in reverent silence; while even the two "callants" appear to feel the influence of the scene, and, hushing their loud laugh-

ter and merry prattle, cower mutely in the stern of the boat.

Another thrust of the boat-hook, and we glide onward—beneath giant arches festooned with glittering stalactites—over dark pools, catching a momentary crimson from the fitful gleam of the torchlight; while the figures in the boat start into view, and vanish again, like Charon's spectral crew; and from the black unknown beyond reverberates the hollow roar of unseen waters, rolling unchecked where the foot of man never trod—a literal realization of Cowley's grim picture of the World of Shadows:—

"There is a place—deep, wondrous deep, below—
Which genuine Night and Horror does o'erflow.
There no dear glimpse of the sun's lovely face
Strikes through the solid darkness of the place;
No gentle stars, with their fair gems of light,
Offend the tyrannous and unquestioned night;
A dreadful silence fills the hollow deep,
Where their vast court the mother-waters keep,
And, undisturbed by moons, in silence sleep."

"There was a fallow ance," says Peter, in a hoarse whisper, "wha livit in Lerwick, no' that far frae me—an awfu' venturesome chiel that naethin' could frichten. Ae mornin', some o' oor lads fell to speikin' o' this cave, and hoo nae man had e'er wan to the inmost o't; and naethin' wad serve this chiel but he maun try't. Weel do I mind him, as he pushed off his boatie frae the pier-heid, wi' a smile on his bonnie face, and the sun glintin' on 's long, yellow hair; and mony—mony a ane stood watchin' him frae the toon. We saw the bit boatie dancin' blithely ower the sparklin' waves, till she came to the mouth o' the cavern—and that was a'! *What* he met wi' there, the Lord only kens; but they that saw him that day saw him again nae mair for ever!"

Told on the very scene of the fearful tragedy, and amid that dreamland of fitful light and ghostly shadow, this wild tale sounds terribly impressive; and I am not sorry when the sharp grating of the boat-hook and the hollow gurgle of the disturbed waters tell me that we are returning to the outer world again.

"I hae heard mony a queer tale," says Peter to me, as we emerge into the sunlight once more—"I hae heard mony a queer tale o' Fraunce, and Jairmany, and o' far-awa' parts, and hoo naethin' at hame can compare wi' them; but ye jist tell yere freends, when ye gang south again, that we

Norlan' fowk hæ twa-three sights here wad ding the hail o' thae anes pat thegither!"
I have done so.

TABLE TALK.

WE have much pleasure in calling our readers' attention to a portion of Mr. Plimsoll's speech, which he delivered on board the *Great Western* steamship, at Bristol. We quote from the *Times*. "As he was walking along he met two gentlemen. One of them said to him, 'Plimsoll, what is the matter?' 'Do you hear the wind?' 'Yes—what of that?' He told them the wind was the shrieks of drowning men; their wives were trembling at home. . . . He had been fortunate enough to receive early proof sheets of the Christmas Number of *ONCE A WEEK*. He there found a very effective story bearing on the subject of life at sea. He was afraid that the facts going before the public in the form of fiction would be pooh-poohed. He had undertaken to write an Appendix to the story, so that they might know the truth of it. . . . The offer had been accepted, and he had written the Appendix. He ventured to think it would cause a shudder to run throughout England."

THE *Gardener's Chronicle* gives the following interesting account of an old oak:—"Some thirty or forty years ago there stood in the Lug Meadows, near Moreton, two very large oaks, about a hundred yards apart. They were known by the names of 'Adam' and 'Eve.' During a violent storm 'Adam' was blown down, and lay for some years after in the meadow. 'Eve,' too, lost her top, and the whole of her remaining branches, leaving nothing but her immense hollow trunk. This trunk now measures twenty-five feet eight inches in circumference at five feet from the ground, and thirteen persons are said to have taken tea within it; twenty-one grown sheep, too, have been counted as they came out from it. When the Shrewsbury and Hereford railway was made, the line included 'Eve' in its boundaries, and the hollow bole was at once appropriated as a residence by an economical navvy. The top was evenly sloped off and thatched, as it still remains; a brick fireplace was built in a low opening on the south side, with a chimney beside it; a door was fitted to the east side, and thus

it was converted into 'a family tenement, compact and convenient.' For many months after the line was opened for public traffic, this hollow bole actually formed the only residence of the station-master. It then became the lamp-room, and was used for this purpose for fourteen years. 'Eve' has now been dead five years, and since 1869 her noble hollow bole has been converted into a stable for a donkey."

IF IT WERE not for the railway accidents, it would be quite cheering just now to read our newspapers, were it only to see the chronicle of the crusade against adulterators. The milk people—the grocers—those scoundrels who send bad, diseased meat to market—if some humane magistrate would only commit them to gaol, and let them eat their own bad mutton and beef! And lastly, the coal merchants, who have for long enough had to answer for their black chicanery. Not content with giving us bad weight, they have supplied us with other than the produce of what geologists call the "coal measures." It must, indeed, be a good person who can feel amiable when he finds that obstinate lump, on a cold day, which will neither break nor burn, only give out a melancholy cizzle and a few crackles, is not Walls nor any other end, but slate. Slate, verb active, a slang term—to abuse by pen, or verbally thrash. Can we not retaliate, and slate the coal merchants? We might; but we British are too magnanimous—we forget and forgive, and buy of the merchant, always supposing that he will begin again with fair dealing; in other words, if he will wipe his slate.

THE PROPER AUTHORITY announces that "purple will be one of the most fashionable colours for out-door costumes during the coming winter, in the United States, both in silk and velvet." At first sight, it seems as if silk and velvet were looked upon as two of the United States; but they are of course only the materials to be tinged by the purple. But how about the fine linen? Perhaps, on account of a national dislike to washing bills, that will be kept out of sight.

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 313.

December 27, 1873.

Price 2d.

"THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN."

CHAPTER LXIX.

A HINT.



SIR RICHARD! for her sake, run!"

Rivière's words rang out hoarsely above the noise of the crowd, and the rattle and jingle of the equipage and its escort; but Sir Richard

Lawler pressed towards him, seeing nothing in the cry but a desire to scare him away.

Then he stood aghast as he saw Rivière engaged in a fierce struggle with an ouvrier; while two others drew knives, and struck at the little Frenchman again and again.

"Sir Richard!" he shrieked, "fly!—I cannot hold it!"

Still Sir Richard Lawler stood there confused, seeing only Rivière struggling to possess himself of something held in the ouvrier's hand, which the other strove to hurl away.

It was all the work of a few moments, and even as it took place before his eyes—crash!—there was an awful explosion—another, and another, and another! Heaven and earth seemed to be coming together; windows were blown in; there was a gap here in the crowd, and another there; horses plunging wildly amongst the people, striking them down; a carriage blown off its wheels, and lying upon its side; a faint, peculiar blasting odour in the air; for a moment a dead silence, and then shriek, yell, groan; the crowd rushing wildly

here and there, trampling their fellow-creatures down on the bloody pavement, hideous with the deadly slaughter; and the soldiers too stunned for the moment to act.

But the horrors were not yet at an end. A few yards from where the carriage lay upon its side, from which two personages had escaped almost unhurt, there was a struggle still going on—two men striving, the one to escape, the other to stay him, or obtain possession of the deadly shell; when a dark-bearded man in an ouvrier's dress ran up and struck at Rivière, just as Lemaire made a sudden writhe.

The blow took effect on the wrong man, but Rivière was hurled to the ground by what followed; for, as if what had passed were not enough, there was another sharp detonation, two more men were lying shattered upon the ground, while the third lay stunned, covered by the body of one of his foes.

"Not dead, I hope? He saved our lives."

"Ah, yes. Monsieur and his lady had a narrow escape, indeed. But he—no—he is much shaken; but the man who held the shell screened him. He was killed, and the other—conspirators both. The carnage has been frightful—the street a little battle-field. It is terrible, this patriotism!"

The speakers were Sir Richard Lawler and one of the surgeons in the *Maison Dieu*, where Rivière had been borne, with many another sufferer by this new attempt upon the life of the King.

But his Majesty had escaped unharmed once more, and been hurried away horror-stricken with his suite to a place of safety.

It was plain to Sir Richard now, and he wondered at Rivière's knowledge of the danger; but there he lay, speechless and closed of eye; and soon after, a request was intimated by the surgeon that the patient should be left in peace.

Sir Richard was there the next day to find Rivière out of danger, lying there apparently free from pain, with his wife seated by his bed.

A shadow crossed his face as he recognized Sir Richard; but the latter stepped forward, held out his hand, and said frankly—

"Thanks, Monsieur Rivière. You saved our lives. For my wife's sake I thank you, as well as for my own."

"It is good," said Rivière, softly. "I saw the miscreant had a shell in his blouse. But there, he has gone to where he will be judged. Let us leave him in peace. Miladi is not hurt?"

"Not at all. She was shaken, of course, but not hurt. Rivière, we are in your debt. Let us be friends once more, and—"

He hesitated; but Rivière smiled faintly, and said, half wearily—

"You think I have your little one. Is it not so?"

"Yes. I cannot help it. We both feel that you know where he is," replied Sir Richard.

"But, as I told you before—I can but repeat it—I know nothing certain of him. I did not take—would not have taken him. Sir Richard Lawler, it was not in me to be so base."

Sir Richard sank back in his chair, a blank look of misery overspreading his countenance. He had so clung to this hope, that, when it was taken from him, despair seemed to look out at him from the future more grimly than ever.

Rivière regarded him for a few moments with a grim expression—almost of satisfied malice—in his face; but, as if by an effort, he drove it away, and his eyes beamed out calmly and pleasantly upon the guest of his sick bedside.

"Perhaps, though, after all, I can help you," he said.

"You can?" exclaimed Sir Richard, eagerly.

"I say perhaps," responded Rivière. "I am not sure, but I have my suspicions. Of course, I know all about your loss. I was a great deal about your house. I was in it more than once when you knew not of my being there. It was at such times as this that I took notice of certain things. Among other things that I noticed, I know that the party with which Lemaire—the poor wretch who is dead now—was leagued watched your house. They knew that you had

been in Paris—that you had harboured me. Hence they said that I was a spy upon their proceedings, and that you were connected with the Government—an English emissary, ready to search them out. They must have watched your movements. And once—knowing, as I did, how they hung about the place—I thought that they had taken your little one to hold as a hostage against you."

"And you think so now?" exclaimed Sir Richard, eagerly.

"No, I do not think so now. It was a stroke above their policy. It never occurred to them, or they might have done; though perhaps they tried. They did not do it."

"Then tell me, pray tell me, and we will both bless you."

Rivière laid a hand, very weak and trembling, upon the other's arm, motioning to him to bend down over the bed, when he whispered a word or two in his ear which made him start back as if incredulous, but for a light to break out all over his face, as he exclaimed—

"Yes, I should not wonder; but there was no object to be gained."

"I have told you what I saw," said Rivière, quietly; "follow it up, and see."

The next moment he uttered a faint groan, so lustily had Sir Richard crushed his hands in both his own before hurriedly leaving the long, cold room.

That night Sir Richard and Lady Lawler were on their way, by the express, for London.

CHAPTER LXX.

A SCENE IN THE DRAMA.

IT was a dismal-looking region where Abram Higgs was standing talking to his wife—a place of gloom and cobwebs, of whitewash and colourwash, that came off on the coats of people who forced their way there—a place where dirty, overgrown book covers seemed to be stood up on end, one against the other; where there were ropes and pulleys overhead, and ropes and pulleys underneath, and a general aspect of daub, dirt, and desolation everywhere, save on one side, which looked like a cavernous open mouth, with a row of dirty, black, glistening teeth, till the eye grew more accustomed to that which it gazed upon, and made out, by means of some keen bright pencils of light which

forced their way through, over the chandelier at the top, that this was a theatre, that the cavernous mouth was only the spectator's portion, with the row of foot-lights, while the chaotic part was the stage and its penetralia, known as "behind the scenes."

There were two actors—three; though one was for the time being invisible, the others almost, in the gloom. They were alone in the theatre, and it was daytime; and a more desolate, chill, draughty, dreary place it is hard to imagine amongst man's works for the amusement of his fellows than a theatre by day, depending for its illumination upon what few stray rays have wandered helplessly in from the outer sunshine.

Abram Higgs was busy, hammer in hand, and with a dozen or so of tacks in his mouth, which interfered slightly with his speech. Jane, his wife, stood what playwrights term R.C., with her back towards where the audience should have been; while her husband made slow descents, at intervals, upon ragged pieces of canvas that had been torn loose from their frames, and tacked them on.

Now he was busy securing a piece of brick wall—painted, of course—that flapped in the wind; a minute after he would attack and nail up a rippling stream, whilst the chimney stack on the top of a house, six feet high, was so dilapidated, that he confided to Mrs. Higgs the fact that nothing but glue and a fresh touch of the brush would set that right.

"They knock things about so," said Abram, very indistinctly. "I'm allus a going over 'em to keep 'em decent; and look at the side o' that hill!"

Abram pointed to a pastoral piece of country, with a green slope, and lambs, whereon there seemed to have been a strange geological catastrophe—a slice of the said hill having been completely torn off and doubled over, leaving the distance, so to speak, bare, in the shape of the frame-work.

"And they ought to pay you twice as much for your trouble, Abram; that's what I say," said Jane, who was shawled up very tight, and bore a basket on her arm.

"That's jest what I say, my dear," said her husband, tapping away at a mossy bank; "but then they don't say so, therefore where's the good?"

"Some people never do get their deserts," said Jane, pettishly.

"That's as true as trouble, Jenny, my dear," said Abram, reaching up to drive in a tack in the back of a sylvan slip, which was in a very tottering condition. "Ah! would you?" he exclaimed, and the slip would, for, true to its name, it tottered over, striking Abram Higgs on the head, which, however, had only rotten painted canvas to encounter, and went through it, leaving him supporting the narrow piece of scenery on his shoulders, Punch and Judy fashion, while his head looked out comically at his wife from a roughly daubed clump of trees.

"Oh, Abram!" exclaimed Mrs. Higgs, "how you frightened me!"

"Didn't frighten you half so much as I frit myself," was the reply of the unfortunate carpenter, as he extricated his neck from its canvas collar; and setting the slip once more on end, looked ruefully at his work. "See what a row there'll be about that blessed bit! And it's wanted to-night! I shall have to clap a bit o' canvas on the back o' that, and then give it a few touches o' the brush."

"But can you, Abram?"

"Can I?" he ejaculated, in a tone of profound contempt. "I've done lots o' that sorter thing. Why, scene painting's easy enough, if you only uses enough colour, and sets it far enough back from the horgiense. Oh, my!"

Here Mr. Higgs began to cough, having been seized with a sudden idea that he had swallowed two or three tin tacks, and having doubts as to their efficacy as an article of diet.

"What's the matter?" said Mrs. Higgs, anxiously.

"Nothing," muttered Abram, counting over the tacks with the tip of his tongue. "Only thought I'd swallowed a couple."

"Why will you put nails in your mouth, Abram?" exclaimed his wife, reproachfully. "You know how dangerous it is."

"No it aint," he grumbled, "unless you swallow 'em."

"Ah," said Mrs. Higgs, "there was a little boy where I was once nurse as swallowed a pin."

"Lor', did he now?" said Abram.

"Yes, that he did," said his wife.

"Well?"

"Well, I don't know any more, only he

used to cry about having pins and needles pricking his feet, and then I left."

"Oh!" said Abram.

And he made a descent upon a fresh piece of damage which he had discovered in a scene pushed right back.

"But I say, you know," he said, returning to his wife's side, where he stood, the while critically examining his work, as he proceeded to recharge his mouth with tacks from a paper packet, mumbling on afterwards in his speech, "how about that boy?"

"No, Abram, it won't do—won't do at all," said Mrs. Higgs.

"Well, I don't see why it wouldn't do," mumbled Higgs. "It's four shillings a week extra as long as the piece lasts, and an introduction to the profession. Now what do you keep on shaking your head about in that aggravating way for? We can't always go on keeping on him without his doing a scrap of work for his own living."

"For shame, Abram! and him quite a baby!"

"Baby, indeed!" exclaimed Abram, so excitedly that he nearly engulfed some tacks, "I never see a baby as could twist in so much bread and butter. Now lookye here, Jane, he'd only have to wear a spangley muslin and wings, and be a fairy and stand in a shell."

"A fairy with a game leg!" said Jane. "Psha!"

"Well, who'd see it when he was a standing still? Why, you'd be able to have a new bonnet soon."

"He—won't—do it—so now then," exclaimed Jane, stamping her foot, and making the contents of her basket rattle—evidently the knife, fork, plate, and basin in which she had brought her husband's dinner. "Now, look here, Abram; if ever you say another word about it, I'll go into a temper for a week."

"No, don't do that, my lass—don't do that," said Higgs, as soothingly as the tacks would let him. "I won't say no more about it—not a word. I only thought, you know, as it would be for the best, that's all, and bring a bit more money into the house."

"Then it shan't be done, so now then," said Jane. "I'd sooner take in washing."

"No, no, don't do that," said Abram, seeking by soft words to pacify his dame;

"it makes the house smell so damp and soapy."

"My pretty boy, indeed! painted and dressed up for a show. I should just think not!"

"Well, I aint a pressing for it, Jane, now, am I?" said Abram, appealing to the irate Mrs. Higgs. "I don't want to do anything as you don't like, my lass. There, give's a kiss and make it up, and I won't say no more."

"What, and your mouth full of tin tacks!" said Jane, indignantly, but evidently softening now she had carried her point.

"Which there warn't only one left," said Abram, removing it before giving the affectionate salute. "And where is he?"

"Along o' Mrs. Prosser in the property-room," said Jane, "bless him! Where are you going to eat your dinner?"

"Oh, Mrs. Prosser'll let me eat it in there, I dessay," said Higgs, laying down his hammer; and then, followed by his wife, he made his way from the stage to a side room full of cases, cupboards, and incongruities, in the midst of which, busily repairing the rents in a pair of tights, was the lady mentioned as Mrs. Prosser; while, seated upon a stool, his chin upon his hands, which rested upon his knees, was a little curly-haired urchin, staring with all the might of his round, blue eyes at a great mask head leaning up against the wall, and whose red nose, ruddy face, and great goggle eyes seemed to have quite a fascinating power over him.

Neither the busy old woman nor he heard the approach of Mr. and Mrs. Higgs, the old lady being intent upon her work; while as for the boy, just as the new comers reached the door, they saw him double his little fist, and after a sharp, furtive glance at Mrs. Prosser, give the great mask a sharp punch right on the side of the nose.

"Ah, Tommy, what are you doing?" exclaimed Mrs. Higgs. "Mischievous again!"

"I don't like him," said the boy, turning very red and hot, but going bravely up to Mrs. Higgs, who contented herself by shaking an admonitory finger in the boy's face and then smoothing his curls.

"Would you mind me sitting down and eating my bit of dinner here, Mrs. Prosser?" said Higgs.

"Lord bless the man, no!" was the reply. "Haven't I told you so a hundred times? And how are you, Mrs. Higgs? Tommy's been—"

"Here's a lady and gent wants to see Mr. Higgs," said a dirty-faced boy, thrusting the said dirty face into the room.

"The Lord ha' mercy!" ejaculated Jane, piously, as she caught the little boy closer to her side, and half concealed him in her shawl.

As for Abram Higgs, he started up from the littered table where he sat, and began to deposit plate, basin, knife and fork in the interior of the fallen head.

"You must say as we're—there, don't stand gaping like that!" cried Jane, in a regular flurry of agitation; "go and see who it is, and don't bring them near me. Come along, my darling."

She caught up the boy, and hurried out amongst the chaotic scenery on the stage, where she stood shivering for a few moments in the gloom.

Suddenly an idea struck her, and she caught the boy to her, and whispered—

"Shall we have a game at hide and seek?"

The child danced about her with delight—showing, though, that he was slightly lame.

"Then you let me hide you, my pretty, and father will come with somebody, and perhaps want to find you, and say, 'Where is he?' and you won't speak, will you?"

"No!" said the little fellow, gleefully.

"Come along, then," said Jane, in a whisper, for she could hear voices approaching—"come along, my pretty one!" and catching the boy up, she ran to the side, and lifted him into one of the stage boxes. "There," she whispered, "creep behind the curtain, and hide there. Don't you move till they are gone, and it will be such fun. They'll be so cross because they can't find you."

The little fellow scuffled in behind the curtain, and he was hardly ensconced before Higgs came on, closely followed by a lady and gentleman, whom, dark as it was, Jane recognized in a moment, and fell a trembling.

"Ah, there she is!" exclaimed a very familiar voice, as soon as the speaker's eyes had become a little accustomed to the gloom. "Mrs. Higgs, Jane, we have come down here to Liverpool, Sir Richard and I, to find you, after a very, very long and weary search."

"And it was very kind of your ladyship," said Jane, huskily. "And did your ladyship want me?"

Sir Richard was about to speak, but Lady Lawler checked him.

"Let me talk to her," she whispered; then turning to Jane, she laid her hand upon her arm, and said, very softly, "Jane, you have been married some time now."

"Yes, ma'am—my lady. Time goes so fast."

"And you have been very happy with your husband?"

"Yes, my lady—no, my lady," said Jane, whose voice trembled audibly.

"Are you a mother, Jane?"

"No, my lady—yes, my lady; that is, I have—"

Here Jane's answer trailed off into nothingness.

"Jane," said Lady Lawler, very quietly, and with a tinge of pathos in her voice, "I was fretful and impatient at times; but I think I was a good mistress to you."

"Which you was, my lady," sobbed Jane, bursting into tears, "and it almost broke my 'art to go away."

"Then how could you be so cruel to me, Jane?"

"Which I don't understand what your ladyship means," sobbed Jane.

"Stand still, sir!—move away from here if you dare!" here exclaimed Sir Richard Lawler, catching Higgs by the arm, just as he was trying to make his exit at the left wing.

"Which you'll please leave my husband alone, Sir Richard, sir," exclaimed Jane, firing up and speaking shrewishly. "Don't you 'it 'im—we aint your servants—so now."

"Richard!—pray!" exclaimed Lady Lawler, running to his side. "Mr. Higgs, don't go—stop and hear what I am going to say to your wife."

"I don't want to," murmured Abram, who had already replenished his mouth with tacks.

"You come and stand over here by me, Abram," exclaimed Jane; and her lord and master shuffled across in a very ungainly way.

"Listen to me, Jane," said Lady Lawler, taking her hand, which Mrs. Higgs submitted to with no very good grace. "We don't come to you with policemen and—"

"Which I should think not, indeed!" exclaimed Jane, indignantly. "What does your ladyship mean?"

"Only that I am a mother, Jane, come

to appeal to your woman's heart—to ask you to have pity on me, and to think of all the sorrow I have passed through."

"I don't understand your ladyship at all," said Jane, trying to release her hand, but trembling violently the while. "What can you mean?"

"Mean, Jane," said Lady Lawler, sadly, "that you are trying to deceive me for some reason. If it is money you want, say so, and you shall have all you ask for."

"Which I'm sure we don't want your money, my lady," said Jane.

Here she was interrupted by her husband, who gave her a terrible nudge with his elbow.

"Be quiet, you stupid oaf, you!" exclaimed Jane, fiercely. "You dare so much as to open your lips, and—"

She said no more, for this much had the desired effect, Abram Higgs collapsing and standing a piece of limpness for the rest of the interview.

"Come, Jane," said Lady Lawler; "tell me all about it."

"All about what, my lady?" said Jane.

"About why you did it. You shall not—I promise you that—you shall not be punished; only give him up to us."

"Your ladyship must be out of your senses!" exclaimed Jane, who shivered terribly.

"You used to love him, I believe that," said Lady Lawler.

"Which I did, my lady," cried Jane, with a burst of tears, and sobbing, "as dearly as if he'd been my own flesh and blood."

Then she saw that she had made a false step, and tried to recover herself.

"But what can your ladyship mean? What have you come to us poor folk for?"

"Oh, Jane—Jane—Jane!" sobbed the mother, "if you are a woman and not a fiend, tell me where you have placed my boy. Tell me that he lives—that he is safe, and I will bless you."

"Oh, indeed, indeed, I—I don't know, my lady," exclaimed Jane, sobbing too; while Sir Richard moved impatiently about, as if longing to seize her, and try and shake the truth from her lips.

"You do—you do know, Jane; tell me, pray tell me! Or you—you, her husband," she cried, turning to Higgs. "Tell me where our child is, if living; where he is buried, if he be dead."

"If you dare to speak, Abram!" cried Jane.

"Then you—you tell me, Jane," cried Lady Lawler. "You shall not be blamed—we will not ask you why you did it—and you shall be rewarded! Only give us back our child."

"But I—I—don't know—I never—I don't know where he is."

"Whoo-o-o-op!" cried a little sweet voice, sounding half muffled, but close at hand.

Lady Lawler uttered a wild cry; and the next moment a pretty round face peered laughingly out of the curtains of the nearest stage box, and then popped back again.

With one bound Sir Richard Lawler darted to the box, and caught out the wondering child, who was the next moment snatched from his arms, and held to his mother's breast, as she rained kisses on his upturned face.

CHAPTER LXXI.

AN OPEN CONFESSION.

FOR a few moments Jane Higgs stood as if paralyzed. She had made a step to reach the box, but it was too late—her secret was discovered. Then she turned to her husband, to see him disappearing in a canvas grove; and now, after standing at bay—after bearing the weight of it all so long, she threw herself on her knees and begged for mercy.

"Oh, my lady—my lady!—oh, Sir Richard, don't—don't send me to prison! I've loved him so much that it will most break my heart to lose him. And his leg is nearly well, and the doctor says he'll grow out of it all as he gets older; and oh! pray, pray forgive me! I did not know what I was doing. Let me kiss him once again!"

The little fellow had struggled now from Lady Lawler's arms; but she was too much overjoyed to feel the pang it might otherwise have caused, as she saw the child run to nestle in his old nurse's breast.

"He thinks I'm his mother," sobbed Jane; "and it will break my 'art to lose him."

"Here, come to the hotel," said Sir Richard. "Bring him, Jane, yourself. Let's get away from here."

The sobbing woman rose obedient to her old master's words; and a few minutes later, when Higgs emerged from his concealment,

Sir Richard Lawler's fly was bearing wife and child away.

"I know'd it must come out sooner or later," he muttered, spitting a tack here and a tack there all about the stage. "If ever there was anything wrong, it's due to the women. But I mustn't leave them there."

This was apropos of the tacks, which he diligently picked up once more; and then, in sore trouble as to the future of himself and wife, he made his exit.

Arrived at the hotel, Jane was all eagerness now to tell all she knew—the more so that, in spite of all, there seemed to be no tendency on the part of either Sir Richard or Lady Lawler, gratified as they were at the success of their quest, to depart from the promise to be satisfied, and not seek to punish.

"It's been a terrible trouble to me, my lady," Jane said; "for I never meant to do it, and I've been 'most heartbroken with keeping my secret, sometimes; but I've always been like a mother to the dear child, as I ought to have been, seeing how cruel I behaved to him at first. I've been punished as it is, my lady, over and over again; and if I were hung, it would be no more than I deserved, my last request only being for some one to put on my gravestone, 'Affliction sore, long time she bore.'"

"It's very kind you are to me after the wicked stories I felt obliged to tell you, my lady and Sir Richard; but it was all through being that scared, I could not for the life of me tell the truth; and, oh! my lady, it wasn't all my fault."

Here Jane covered her face with her hands for a few minutes, and rocked herself to and fro, sobbing so that it was some time before they could get her to proceed.

"I'll tell you all directly, my lady, only please be patient with me; and please—please don't think of sending for the police when you hear all of how bad a woman I have been. I have never seen a policeman for months past without having a cold shiver run all through me, for it seemed as if they knew I'd been guilty of stealing the child, and them reading it all plain in my face; and I'm glad now that it's all found out, so that I may once more be easy in my mind."

"Yes, but pray go on," said Sir Richard, impatiently.

"Yes, yes, Sir Richard and my lady, I will," sobbed Jane, trembling as she spoke.

"It was like this, Sir Richard—that day—that afternoon—you and my lady—were gone out—Abram—my Abram—was to come and see me—he wanted for us to be married—and I—I kept putting him off—and I saw him—come—from the dining-room window—and it was open!"

Jane's voice had been growing more broken each moment; and now, catching sight of the eager looks directed at her, she broke down.

"I—oh! what shall I do?" she sobbed. "I hardly dare tell you all. Pray forgive me, Sir Richard, and it shall be the last time!"

"If you'll go on," he said, gruffly. "If not—"

"Oh, yes, Sir Richard, I'll go on," she sobbed. "I—that is—the dining-room window was open—I forgot it—but as I went out I asked Fanny to look at the child—and mind him. And then I went down—and Abram came in through the area gate, and down the steps, and we stood in the area, close against the coal-cellar door, where people who walked along the pavement couldn't see us. We got talking a deal about being married, and I'd nearly consented to give notice, when I recollected that it was time to go, and Abram kissed me, and I kissed him again, for he was soon going to be my husband; and though he was very fond of me, I'd snubbed him a deal; and I thought in my heart I'd send him away happy. And very happy we both were, till I felt a cold chill all through me, as I heard a pretty little laugh above our heads. I looked up, and there, at the dining-room window, was that darling child, climbed up so as to stand on a chair and lean out; when, seeing me down below, he laughed and prattled in his little way, and got right on to the sill.

"Run up and stop him, or he'll be out!" Abram said; but I couldn't move.

"Go back, my pretty," I says to him, with my head all on the swim; and then—I don't know how it was, I put my hands up, horrified-like; but the poor little darling—oh! I can't tell it—I can't tell it!"

There was a burst of sobbing for a few moments, and then Jane went on again.

"The—the poor darling thought I had put out my hands same as I did when I was teaching him to jump off the table to be caught; and before I knew what he was

going to do, he jumped right out of the window, staggering me so with horror that I couldn't try to catch him; and there, in an instant, he came down with a horrible dull crash on the stones, falling all those feet, and then never moving; when I snatched him up, and ran with him into the coal-cellar.

"'Oh, he's dead! he's dead! my pretty darling!' I sobbed; and I felt as if my heart would burst. Then a dreadful fright came over me, and I seemed to see myself hanging on a gallows for murdering the poor child; for nobody I felt sure would believe me when I said that I'd left him, and he tumbled out of the window. But I could never think of words to tell you how I felt, and what horrible thoughts came over me again and again.

"I seemed to want to scream, but I couldn't. I could only stand and look at that little limp thing in my arms, that only a few moments before was all life, and laughing at me, and now so still and helpless! I couldn't think about a doctor then—only about my being hung, and Abram's heart being broken. And it seemed as if something was putting all sorts of terrible thoughts into my head, till poor Abram spoke, and then I was ready to do something.

"'Oh, Jenny!' he said, 'what shall we do?'

"'I won't be hung, if it's only for your sake, Abram,' I thought to myself; and I put the poor little thing in his arms.

"'Hold it a minute,' I said, in a voice I did not know for mine; and I said *it*, for I thought the little thing was dead. Then I left him standing inside the coal-cellar for a few minutes, while I ran to fetch a shawl, and for a minute I thought the area door was locked, and I should have to run away. But I got in, ran and fetched a shawl, and going back, I wrapped the poor little thing right in it, and looked then in Abram's face.

"'What shall I do, Jenny?' he says, looking at me.

"'Go and bury it somewhere,' I says, hoarsely, not in my voice, but just as if something in me was speaking to him; and, without a word, he went up the area steps and out with that bundle, no one seeing him; and I, all the while feeling most dead with fear, crept in, and met Fanny directly, and spoke to her, as you know.

"Often and often it was on my lips to confess it, but I never dared, and always kept to that tale that I had left the poor child; and fear of being hung for what I had done kept me more and more from saying a word, till, as days went on and I was ill and half mad, it was kept hid.

"Then Abram came to see me when I was ill, and from what he told me I was almost ready to confess; but I dared not—dared not, though I wished hundreds of times that I had. And at last, you know, sir, he fetched my boxes, and I went away, and we were married. And always after things went bad with us—and all, as I've told myself hundreds of times, as a judgment upon me; I mean all the poverty we've had, and the misery, and being afraid of being found out. It's all been one long time of punishment, my lady, and all for a bit of neglect; for I loved the poor dear too well to have hurt a hair of his head."

The affection displayed by the little fellow for his old nurse was the plainest proof of this assertion; and as to his treatment, no matter what poverty Jane and her husband might have suffered, the boy was well dressed, clean, and healthy; while his lameness was one that he would soon outgrow.

POSTSCRIPT.

THAT LITTLE FRENCHMAN.

IT was some twelve years after the scene at Liverpool, that Sir Richard Lawler, a florid, slightly grey man, was returning with his lady from a trip through Switzerland and Italy. Their son, a handsome youth, was their companion; and for attendants, to occupy the rumble of the old-fashioned travelling carriage, with its well-bound springs and boxes and leather pockets, they had a comely dame, with forty years written on her pleasant face—her ladyship's maid—and Sir Richard's—milord's, as the hotel-keepers dubbed him—valet, a stolid, straightforward, middle-aged man, who confided to the lady's maid (his wife) that he thought foreigners rather a low lot.

It is worthy of remark that her ladyship always addressed her maid as Jane; and that Sir Richard generally summoned his sturdy valet by the name of Higgs—sturdy, indeed, for he had saved his master's life, swimming ashore with him when their boat was capsized on Como.

The travellers had reached their hotel at Paris, and were about entering, when an

exclamation from Lady Lawler arrested Sir Richard, who started for a moment on seeing his wife run to a well-dressed lady, and seize her hands—he following suit, however, the next minute by frankly saluting a little, stiff, grey-moustached officer, who was as cordial and frank in return.

But the intimacy ceased there, after Sir Richard had learned that Colonel Rivière was high in favour, and one of the leading officers of the National Guard. They were all very cordial together, and invitations were given on both sides, though neither party wished the other to accept. Five minutes after, they were parted to meet no more.

"Higgs," said young Clive Lawler to the valet that afternoon, "who was that officer papa was speaking to in the hall?"

"Don't know, sir—leastwise, can't say, sir," said the imperturbable Higgs.

But young Clive was not to be put off. Finding Jane, he put the same question to her.

"Jane, who was that officer papa was speaking to in the hall? He seemed so cross when mamma mentioned him afterwards; and mamma said she would rather we went on at once to London, as she did not wish to see any more of that little Frenchman; and then papa looked pleased again. Who was he, Jane?"

"Who was he, my child?" said Jane, mysteriously. "Why, that little Frenchman."

THE END.

HIS AT LAST.

CONCLUSION.

TO the intense satisfaction of the fair Julia, and all the wedding guests assembled at Islington Court, it had been a bright, frosty morning, but towards mid-day the sky clouded over, and as evening drew near, the first snowy harbingers of winter fell, and with them came heavenly messengers who bore Mrs. Manning's gentle spirit to its loving kindred on high.

That night, before the open library window, through which were fast driving in large flakes of snow, knelt Agnes Lane, listening as one fascinated to the gay chimes of the village bells, pealing forth in honour of the hymeneal sacrifice that had been completed under their immediate patronage that morning. It was in vain she tried to

shake off their weird spell; each time as she rose to shut out the sound, an invisible hand seemed to hold her down, and compel her to remain an unwilling listener to their mocking voice.

From her earliest days she had been haunted by bells; in childhood they had played the chief part in all nightmares and childish horrors; and though, as she grew in mind and body, she gradually became emancipated from their influence, yet to-night they again seemed to hold her unmercifully in their mysterious power—laughing, chuckling, and clanging out their mirth over her blighted hopes.

"Would they ever cease their mocking laughter?" thought she, pressing her hands to her ears; and as if determined to break from their spell, she began hastily to review the last few months of her life. But even this expedient failed; for as each month slid from her memory, it was checked off by an extra loud clash from the bells, which, as if gloating over her last sad month, rang out quicker and quicker, and louder and louder, till they suddenly finished with a great, prolonged crash, as her retrospect brought her up to that morning: the mockers were at rest at last.

Taking advantage of the unexpected lull, she started to the window with the intent of shutting it, when borne upon the breezes through the open window came wafted into the room the dull, slow, solemn sound of the passing bell. Faintly, yet surely, with cruel distinctness it tolled out its melancholy dirge, then ceased for awhile, tolled three clear, sharp, separate notes, paused, three more, and was still. It was then, in the dark, dreary room, with the snow splashing on her upturned face, that Agnes remembered for whom the bell had tolled. Springing up in her agony, she flew at the sash and brought it down with a run, just as the wedding bells gaily pealed forth anew.

A month had passed, and Agnes Lane's probation time was over. The next day was the one on which Mr. Græme was to claim her as his own. Like so many of her sex, she was employing this her last night of freedom in destroying all vestiges of a former love. With wide, brilliant eyes, and hair well pushed from her forehead, she stood before the library fire holding the few mementoes she still retained of her untoward love.

One by one she dropped them slowly into its glowing caverns, and watched how greedily the flames licked them up; last of all she let fall the ill-fated note, which, as if knowing what mischief it had already wrought, refusing to follow its humble brethren, fluttered for an instant undecidedly on the top bar of the grate, and then floating carelessly to the hearth, lay smouldering there. Looking down at it, Agnes began unconsciously counting the sparks, which act brought to her mind visions of long ago.

She saw again the low, dark room at the top of four flights of stairs; an old woman bending over her ceaseless knitting-pins; a small child stretched on a mat before the grate, intensely absorbed in contemplating what to the uninitiated appeared an old play-bill smouldering on the hearth, but to the child represented the struggles of the righteous in fleeing from their house of prayer. The child watched the sparks chase each other—now hurrying up, here treading on each other's heels in their anxiety to be first out—and her eyes kindled as she breathlessly awaited the advent of the three last stars; but the congregation proved a very slow-getting-out-one that evening. Just as she thought the last batch were passing through the porch, an unwary youth stepped on the trailing folds of a fashionable worshipper, and there was a halt and a blaze; then came a few laggards down the aisle: the inevitable boy whom inactivity and a long sermon had sent to sleep, the old lady who had been diligently searching for the spectacles safely ensconced on her nose, and the gentleman who always stopped to the last. Having twice been taken in, the child proceeded warily to sum up the third time. With a prolonged intonation she began: "Here comes the clerk!" and not until his star had quite disappeared did she joyfully exclaim, "Here is the parson! and last comes the sexton to—"

When Agnes got so far in her recollections she stopped and shuddered, as the nursery fable brought the present to her mind.

"Why should the word parson be hateful to me? Ah, I remember, it is my last day of freedom. I may think of *him* now; but never again. No more past after to-night: it will be all future then. My future—what is my future? I have no future!" she ex-

claimed, pressing her hands to her burning brain, as she left the room, the house, and went out into the cold, bitter night.

Sweeping the white snow with her long black dress, while large flakes fell on her dark locks and heated brow from the trees above, Agnes hurried on, unheeding whither her footsteps led her, and they went straight to Death's Hollow. There was no kind angel to stay those unthinking steps, and soon she was standing at the side of the uproarious river—not where she had stood with Captain Nolan watching the reflection of the moon, some three months ago; but close up under the old oak, to within a few feet of which the river had now risen. In bitter anguish she flung her arms around, and leant her aching head against its battered trunk; but in so doing, struck her forehead violently against something cool and sharp. Startling back, she recognized, as still sticking into its bark, the broken blade of Captain Nolan's knife. Was it an emblem of the durability of their vows? Uttering a faint cry, she fell back on the snow at the foot of the old grey oak, and there remained white, still, and apparently lifeless.

Soon the river crept up to her outstretched arms, toyed gently with her long, dark hair, kissed her white lips, and retired for a space, as if frightened at its own presumption; till, joined by fiercer waters from above, it came rushing up again, lifted her slight form, tossed it approvingly among its silvery ripples, played with it lingeringly among its shallows; till, getting venturesome, it bore it out into the middle of the stream, where the current caught it, and swept it down to the river on its moonlit waves.

On the same evening the station-master of Heathfield was impatiently standing before his telegraphic apparatus, anxiously awaiting the mail to be signalled. Before a roaring fire in the common room stood talking, the porter of the station and a tall, muffled-up, great-coated footman; while outside could be heard the dull thud of horses' hoofs, the crunching of snow under wheels, and the muttered objurgations of the coachman as he drove round and round the magic circle.

The porter, who took a peculiar interest in all the comings and goings at the station, had been very much surprised at the sudden announcement of the return of Captain and Mrs. Nolan by the late mail that night,

when preparations on a large scale were making to welcome them home in becoming style the next morning.

Knowing he would be called on by the whole village to give a reason for this, he, being wise, set about gleaning as much information as he could from his worthy friend, James.

"Then it was quite unlooked-for at Islington Court, their coming back to-night?"

"Just so—we never heard a word about it till your master sent up the telegram; then we had a pretty row, I can tell you. Missis flies into one of her tantrums, vows it's all master's fault, and goes on dreadful all dinner-time. Says she won't have nothing sent for 'em; if they chose to come back on the wrong day they might find their own way, and so on. After dessert, down comes master into the pantry, says as how he shouldn't like the captain not to be met; and whilst he's giving his orders, in marches missis, turns him out, and packs us off at once; and there is them poor horses and Thomas a-getting their deaths of cold, all along of her rampaging."

"Then you don't know why they are coming to-night?" put in the porter, sticking to the subject with leech-like avidity.

"No; but me and Thomas think as how the captain, who is a very still gentleman, has got wind of the hovation they were a-going to have to-morrow, and has come down quietly to-night in order to give 'em the slip."

"Well, if I had lots of money, you wouldn't catch me out such a cold night as this, when I had the chance of stopping by a warm fire; but I have took notice that if there is a bad day gentlemen always do travel, or if there is aught wrong with t' train t' carriages are sure to be full."

"You are always late on your line," sarcastically remarked James, who, being a faithful follower of his master, was a red-hot anti-N.G.R.-ite.

"Noa! Come, she is only treating you to what you are accustomed to. Happen she thought it would be making you conceited to be up to time to-night."

"Will you hold your noise there, and attend to t' signals, man, when t' mail's stopping!" exclaimed the station-master, issuing from his den.

"They are coming!" screamed James to the wretched coachman.

"Should like to see 'em!" sceptically

holloaed back Thomas, who had just come to the conclusion that trains were a delusion, and this special one a mere will-o'-the-wisp to decoy him and his horses to sudden death.

"She has turned the curve; if he does not slacken speed, he will overdraw," said the station-master, imparting his thoughts to James, who stood hard by ready to make a rush at the luggage and maid.

There was a banging of doors, a whistle, a few slight reflections on the coldness of the night, and the train was fast speeding out of sight, leaving on the platform three passengers and a pile of luggage. Hurrying into the waiting-room, Captain and Mrs. Nolan stood warming themselves before the fire, while the station-master bustled about.

"Is anything waiting for us?" inquired Phil.

"Yes, sir—Mr. Brownsmith's carriage has been here some time."

"There, Julia, I think we had better start at once, if you are warmer now."

"How can I be warm, travelling at this time of night, and in the dark, too?" said she, following her husband to the door.

"I am afraid, Thomas, you must have had a very cold time of it, waiting out here, for the train was twenty minutes behind time."

"Ye're just about reet there, captain; and if them horses and me don't catch our deaths of cold, my name's not Thomas Taylor."

Captain Nolan felt depressed as he got into the carriage. It seemed as if he was bent on sending every one to a premature grave by this sudden swoop down of his. Had not his wife told him every time she awoke during their journey from London that the cold was killing her? and now the first person he spoke to on alighting echoed the same story; but still, when he thought of the ovation he should escape by this move, it made him comparatively light-hearted.

He had given in on one point, and let them have a grand wedding; but he had no idea of being made to enter the village of Heathfield to the tune of "See the conquering hero comes." Somehow, he felt very unlike a hero, especially a conquering one.

As they drove past the Heathfield gates and under the Hall oaks, Captain Nolan

became flushed and restless. Quietly letting down the window on his side, he gazed out at the white world.

It was one of those bright, cold, moonlight frosty nights, when every object is clear to the eye, and every sound distinct to the ear for miles. There was a low, dreary murmuring in the air, as of the rushing of many waters, and as he caught the sound he shuddered; for it brought to his remembrance another moonlight night not many months ago, when all was still save the low rippling of the river, as he stood with a slight girlish form in Death's Hollow. He saw again that girlish face raised to Heaven, while, with one hand clasped in his, she registered her vow to him. And now the scene became more vivid, rising up with realistic distinctness before him. There! between the park palings and the carriage she stood; he fancied he felt her breath on his heated cheek; he stretched out his arm to make sure it was no phantom but reality, and in doing so the river, the old oak, all melted away, leaving a calm, cold, rigid face, marked with a crimson scar on the forehead, to seemingly fade in his grasp.

As it vanished from his sight, he jumped up and leaned out of the window. They were crossing the bridge now, and he looked down at the river below. He noticed it had risen much, and completely covered the path on the Heathfield side, while the waves dashed angrily against the stone piers of the bridge; then, running his eye up the bright streak in mid-stream, he caught the shadow of a dark outline floating down it. Straining his eyes, he started to see reflected in the waters: a part of his vision—the face, the scar, all were there. He felt sure it was a human form he saw swiftly gliding out of sight. Drawing back, he exclaimed, greatly agitated—

"Good God! what is it? It is a human face! Look, Julia, there—there by those reeds, it's floating into shade. Oh, God! it is gone."

"Do put up that window, Philip, if you do not want to give me my death of cold. And how can you talk such nonsense? Human face!—human fiddlestick!" exclaimed she.

"Then you do not think it was anything?" said he, catching at the slightest hope.

"I do not think—I am positive I saw nothing but weeds."

"Thank God!" said he, greatly relieved. "You cannot imagine what a weight you have lifted from my mind, for I certainly could have sworn I saw—no matter what. It was one of those strange phantasies of the brain which by intensity become visible to the eye. But, Julia, let me wrap this rug better round you? I should never forgive myself if you caught cold to-night."

Early next morning Mr. Græme was up, and restlessly fidgeting about the house. For the twentieth time he drew out his watch, consulted again the steady-going chronometer over the fireplace, walked to the window, took a look at the church clock, and then compared all three together; but, do what he would, there was no forcing those three eminently respectable timepieces one whit the faster—they all three grimly pointed to the half-hour before nine. Mr. Græme felt hurt at their seeming apathy. Surely it was hardly unnatural in him to expect that such old friends should in some measure be influenced by his present feelings, and endeavour to keep pace with his wishes? There he stood, one poor man against three well-tongued watches (not women), and he felt it was hopeless to dispute their veracity.

With a sigh, he resigned himself to pass the two hours which must elapse before starting for the Hall in intercommunion with the *Times*. Taking up the uncut paper (never had such an irregularity occurred to the rectory Jupiter before), he stared steadily at it until it dropped from his hands. What mattered it to him if some ill-conditioned youth had shouted 'A bas l'Thiers?' and how insignificant a ministerial crisis in Greece appeared, compared to the momentous proposal he was about to make!

Taking out his pocket-book, and opening it at a well-worn page, on which was written the promise extorted from Agnes by Mrs. Manning, he read it carefully over. Satisfied that he was correct as to date, day, and time, he took up his hat and went out, to while away the time in pacing his lawn to and fro. Wholly engrossed with his own great happiness, he seemed to tread celestial air: this poor earth, with its fears and sorrows vanished from his mind. If ever man was walking in a dream of love, it was he that morning.

But there is not so much happiness in this world, that one man may engross for long so large a share of it. It was time for him to be awakened, and in his case it was done with cruel abruptness. Stumbling violently against some object on the ground, he was forcibly drawn to things terrestrial, and looking down beheld—good God! what was it that he saw?

In former years the river had brought him many presents, but never one so precious as that which now lay at his feet. Stooping down, he clasped the cold form of Agnes Lane to his heart, and imprinted a kiss on her icy lips. As he did this, a cold shudder swept through his frame as the dread truth shot to his mind that she was dead. What had he got possession of?—the shell! But the spirit, where was it?—aye, where? One had been before him, and stolen the immortal fire.

Was it thus his dream of happiness was to end?—he who had loved her from a child; had watched and waited, with hope and without hope, through long weary months and dark dreary years. Was it thus, when his golden treasure seemed within his grasp, that it was to fade from his touch? Could it be that God had dealt so hardly with him? Sinking on his knees, he laid her gently on the grass, and, gazing long and wistfully into her wide, staring eyes, there read his doom. Yes, she was his at last; but how? Only when death had crowned her with immortality.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

IN VINO VERITAS.

YOU may possibly know that great rotunda-like building, some distance up the Hampstead-road—have seen it on your way to the Heath, with its sandy stretches, glorious views, and fresh air. It is not a handsome building, looking as it does like a poor relation of the Colosseum in Regent's Park, or an unworthy scape-grace brother of Rowland Hill's Chapel in the Blackfriars-road. Ask any man, and he will tell you that it is the big engine-house of the London and North-Western Railway. Don't believe him. You know what David said about all men, so be not deceived. It was once the company's engine-house, but on going up to the door now you will see upon it, in large letters,

“W. & A. G.” Your nostrils will be saluted with strange odours; and on entering you become aware of quiet-looking individuals in her Majesty's service peering about, gauging rod in one hand, memorandum book in the other; for you are standing in the great bonded store of a large firm of wine and spirit merchants, and the excisemen are taking notes of duty to pay for the benefit of Mr. Gladstone's Budget.

It is a huge building, with casks ranged round it in hundreds. Spirits for the most part, whiskey and brandy, hogsheads and puncheons lying side by side, emitting a pleasant odour. Here is a man busy nailing tin over the bung-holes, and there a gauger inserting his stick. What a puzzle it seems that, on taking it out, he does not pass it through his lips. But he does not: people handle wines and spirits here, they leave others to taste.

Walking down an avenue of casks, we enter an enclosed space, in the floor of which are a couple of small trap-doors; and here the scent of spirits grows stronger, for we are standing over a couple of huge vats, each of which will hold some thirteen thousand gallons, and to these trap-doors cask after cask is rolled, the bungs started, and the potent contents run in.

Leaving this bonded store, we pass through a huge range of cellars gorged to their full extent, and reaching from the store right away to Messrs. Gilbey's stores at Camden Town. There is the old familiar vinous odour in each great arched cellar, a mingling of wine and sawdust; and look which way you may, it is to gaze through vistas of casks—sherries, ports, clarets, rums, gins, brandies, whiskeys, apparently in quantity sufficient to supply all London for the next ten years. This our ignorant idea!

For a few minutes we are led out into a yard to confront one solid stack of glass bottles, containing hundreds upon hundreds of thousands, all laid up neat and in rows, each separated from each by long laths of wood. And here we learn that, in consequence of trades unionism amongst the bottle-makers, ordinary wine bottles went up in price something like seventy per cent.; so that this firm was driven to import them from the Continent, and build them up here in store.

Plunging again into the cellar ranges, we have an extensive walk, always through avenues of casks—comfortable, round-stomached fellows, some of them, looking

brown and even golden in tint, telling of brandy or sherry; while some others blush red and ruddy, whispering of the blood of dead grapes, plucked from the living stem in far-off Burgundian vineyards, and pressed to make this rich, red wine. Tawny of hue is the tint round these great pipes—pipes of wood, mind, casks—for from famed Oporto they have come. The must foamed in the wine press—not round the white feet of laughing girls in Luna's vats, but where the dark-eyed Portuguese emulate the veils and fans of Seville's dames—where the orange grows like a golden ball amid the green, glistening leaves of the grove, and the thick, rich cloying scent of the flower whispers of British brides. Where are we? In the groves of Portugal? Amid the clustering black grapes, with their rich purple bloom? Where the white grapes cluster that form thy topaz-glancing liquid, O Xeres? Nay, only here, in these sawdust-strewn cellars, with rows of casks—pipes, puncheons, what you like to call the tubs; and from Messrs. Gilbey's cellars the mind floats away—and all without tasting, mind you that!—away to sunny France, to Bordeaux—away to Spain or Portugal—anywhere that is famous for its vines, whose grapes are richest and of most exquisite flavour.

Another few yards, and—no, bedad! that's not wine. The odour here was born in no sunny land. And is there a better smell at all at all in the whole wide wurld? Yes, there's no doubt about it—this is Irish whiskey, just the same scint as we smelt that day when the water filled our boots as we tramped through the bog by Ballyknock-andhry after the snipes. Wasn't it just a shnift of the still we caught athwart our noses from where the peat was burning?

"But whisht," as our guide said; "are we ather turning informer?"

Another row of casks, and a similar whiskey odour. Now that reminds one of far up the Highlands and Talisker, the water of whose still came over twenty falls; and of Long Chon, by whom the men of Oban swear and drink and grow lusty—for "eh, laddie, there's no' a headache in a gallon of it."

Passing out of the range of cellars into the broad daylight, we enter now a huge building wherein are fitted up vast copper stills in full work with their great worms and vats, and the pure white spirit coming

bubbling out into receptacles prepared to catch it. This is the gin-rectifying place; and now, not *verb. sap.*, but a word to the unwise, for we take it for granted that there are two or three readers who do not thoroughly know the meaning of the term when they see the words "rectified gin." Of those who do know, we ask pardon.

Imprimis. Do you know from whence the spirits you drink are obtained? In spite of your knowledge, let us recapitulate, and say that good brandy is distilled from the lees of wine, or from inferior grapes; that whiskey is distilled from malt—the sprouted and dried form of barley; that rum is from sugar canes, or from molasses; and gin from raw corn.

Much has of late been said about fusel oil, and that it is a noxious quality in spirits. People wrote to the *Times* about it; but they did not know that if the fusel oil were abstracted from a spirit, its flavour, its distinctive quality, would be taken with it; for the fusel oil gives that peculiarity to the whiskey or brandy.

But to return to our rectifying. The spirits distilled from malt are to a certain extent pure, while those distilled from raw corn contain harsh qualities that have to be drawn away by redistillation; and this is why gin, or corn spirit, is rectified or purified as we see it now, to come over from the still, a hot, powerful, but almost tasteless spirit. Then why gin? Was it because invented at Geneva? Who shall say? As we get it, it is the corn spirit rectified, generally sweetened with sugar, and flavoured with that turpentine taste given by infusion of juniper berries (*juniperus communis*)—the juniper being one of the coniferæ or firs. No wonder, then, that good gin tastes of turpentine!

We pass out of this great rectifying-house, after a glance at its contents, one branch wearing the aspect of a chemical laboratory, and cross a road and railway metals, glance at a canal, and enter a vast building, where the busy work of the establishment goes on.

Shall we describe it? Impossible, unless we write a book. It is only within the limits of a Casual Observer to touch lightly upon what he sees. But first there were the stock cellars, not of casks, but of bottled wines. We were led to bins of claret, bins of port, bins of sherry; but the reader must understand that they were not bins in

the ordinary acceptation of the term, each bin being a cellar, and of their hugeness some conception may be formed when it is intimated that all clarets are bottled and kept for a year at least before being sent out to the public, and that the contents of one row of bins alone numbered upwards of 40,000 dozen. Here we came upon piles and stacks of boxes whose aspect we thought we knew. It was our first encounter within these walls, but they were unmistakable, and whispered of sparkling Epernay and Rheims wines, the vintage of Champagne. A box was open, and the pink paper, the bulgy cork, and the foil-covered neck, told that we were right—they were foreigners all.

Ascending to the top of the building, it was to reach to where casks were being rolled to trap-doors, similar to those which we had seen at the bonded stores; and here four or so, after being rolled on to a shoot, have the bungs started, and the spirit is run into huge vats, where it stands to fine. How many of these many-thousand-gallon vats are there? It is more than we can say, but there they are; and, on descending to their level, it is to find that they have smaller vats by their sides; for it is from these small vats the men bottle, and not from the great patriarchs, which have a gauge at their side to tell how far they are full.

But before noticing this bottling, let us descend and see the bottles. We go down then to a wet, sloppy, watery cellar, over whose asphaltum floor the water, hot and cold, now runs in streams. We have passed huge stacks of new bottles, and stacks of old and dirty bottles; a cellar, too, full of broken glass met our eye, ready to go back to the bottle-makers'. And now it is "ware toes," for men work here by piece, and they run—men and boys—frantically about with barrows of bottles to the boys who wash them, moist fellows in india-rubber aprons, standing before machines whereon are hollow revolving brushes, each gifted with jets of water. The bottle is applied to a hot-water brush, and off comes its dirty label; then it is thrust over a revolving brush; sprays of water, pure and bright, play over its interior; and after a certain amount of cizzle and fizz, the bottle is put down clean, wheeled away to drain, then sent up on a lift to floors above, where we follow it—for this place is wet; and now we are amongst the bottlers.

We will merely glance at these men busy by wine casks, bottling from them carefully so that the wine is in good condition, and watch this gang of three—we think—bottling spirits from a little vat.

Piecework it is here, too, and the men work hard. One brings empty bottles on a little iron-wheeled truck, and another is seated before a tray-like apparatus, to fill. He has a tap turned on, which runs into and fills one receptacle, to which there are half a dozen long syphon taps, the spouts of which run right down into the bright, clean bottles, and you see the spirit gushing and sparkling into the glass. Snatch!—he takes a bottle away, and places it full in a truck, at the same time putting an empty one in its place; and so on, again and again, till the truck is full of bottles of bright, amber brandy, which his companion runs away with to the corker. But how is it that the bottles do not run over when full? Six is a good many for one man to manage at a time. The syphon principle does it: the spirit runs till the bottle is quite full, and then stops; and if the bottles are held up to the light, we find them all filled exactly to the same height, while the few drops dripped from the tap are taken care of.

Now we follow the little truckful to the corker, who is supplied with neatly enamelled and doubly stamped corks. These he wets, gives them a nip or two in a press, and drives them home with two or three taps of a mallet. Then away they go to a man who is busy with the neat chocolate labels of the firm, bearing the name, the quality of the spirit, &c., and the crest of that peculiar griffin who is a size too large for the castle he inhabits, and has split the walls.

The labelling done, the bottles are examined to see that label and cork tally, that they are full, and that the contents are in good condition. Should they answer all these demands, away they go to the bin, to wait till that thirsty soul, the British public, wants to wet his whistle, and orders of the agents who obey.

As for us, we turn off to where men are busy executing orders. And here we have our own bin cases—a patent of the firm—admirably contrived to act as box for a journey, and for a bin when the contents reach their journey's end. We have a special string for tying up these boxes, made with a red strand, to keep speculators from tampering; and special labels to cover

the string knots. Again, even the labels act their part. But to go through the minutiae of the various admirable plans and contrivances for saving labour would be tedious to the reader; though, to the Observer, it is interesting to watch the ingenuity that has been brought to bear in inventing little plans for making the machinery of the vast establishment complete.

It is almost like going backwards, but we pass away to the side of the building, to where the cases come in, and see them go through the carpenter's shop, where the faulty are repaired, some being renovated, perhaps to the extent of a new side; and no wonder, when the journeys they make east, west, north, and south are taken into consideration. For now we stand by where the railway lines run in with empty trucks, waiting to be filled; full trucks waiting to be relieved of empties; and full trucks waiting for the panting engine to come and draw them away. The railway does no mean trade with Messrs. Gilbey's place, for a train of thirty waggons, heavily laden, is no unusual number for the engine to fetch each day. And this is for the London and North-Western alone; for the other lines, Pickford's and Chaplin and Horne's vans are waiting by the score, while the firm have a long array of their own vans always busy. It will serve to give some idea of the amount of business, to state that, during the first fortnight alone of December, in anticipation of Christmas requirements, upwards of 90,000 dozen bottles of wines and spirits were sent out by this firm; and that had these bottles been laid lengthways, in a single line, they would have reached from London to Birmingham, and back again.

With such a vast business being carried on, and some fifteen hundred agents kept supplied, the question arises—are we becoming a nation of wine bibbers? Nothing of the kind; but we are growing more refined in our libations. The bottle of good sound natural claret now occupies the table where beer once was only taken, and the simple, wholesome wines of France are brought within reach of all; for who would be without wine when a shilling will purchase a single bottle that a few years back would hardly have been bought for a crown? And this is not all. That shilling bottle of good honest Bordeaux, that has already been two years in bottle, when next autumn I take my outing down in remote

Cornwall, in pleasant Wales, by the Giants' Causeway, or up in "Aberdeen awa," wherever I go, there I can obtain its fellow; and, what is more important still, at precisely the same price as here in London. As I reflect upon this, I am enabled to better realize that large business establishments, such as this, possessing their representatives in every town and village, have become a by no means unimportant convenience in these days, when the value of a shilling is so seriously diminished as regards the purchase of most articles of diet. But enough. We smell of wine and spirits after a three hours' race through an establishment which the majority of Londoners cannot know to be in existence. The place is so vast, the business carried on so extensive, and all with the ease and quietness of a huge machine. Truly, we English ought to be proud of our institutions—this being one that we might with allowable pride show to a foreign friend, even though he were from the land of extensive transactions, and "where, stranger, when we do trade, we go in for a big thing!"

THE WISDOM OF OUR ANCESTORS (1700).

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE TARANTULA.

THE *Lacertus Facetanus*, or *Tarantula*, whose bite gives name to a new disease. Those who are wounded by it are denominated *Tarantati*; it is a kind of an overgrown spider, about the size of a common acorn.

It borrows its name from *Tarentum*, in *Apulia*, a city in the kingdom of *Naples*, built by a band of *Lacedemonians*, who, having no inheritance at home, were sent thither to seek their fortunes, where they built that town, and made it the capital of *Magna Græcia*.

This little animal is furnished with eight eyes and eight legs; its skin is tender and soft, of various colours, and always hairy; it is of the oviparous kind, and propagates its species by eggs, and sometimes a hundred eggs have been found in one female.

In the opinion of some, it is not only an inhabitant of *Apulia*, but peculiar to that province, a situation that may be called a garden of rarities. Plenty of generous wine, delicate honey and oil, an early spring, a soft winter, render it a most delightful habitation, especially to old persons; and yet in

that most agreeable region, this little tyrant reigns and spreads terror.

But it is observable that it hurts nowhere but in Apulia, and that only in summer, especially in the Canicular-days, so called from Canicula, that signifies a dog—hence Dog-star, which rises cosmically with the sun the 19th of July, and is supposed to be the brightest, as well as the largest, star in the firmament.

The Dog-days denote certain days before and after the rising of this star, to whose appearance the ancients ascribed terrible effects; the very first day, it appears, they say (but without reason), the sea becomes boisterous and boils like a cauldron, produces variety of distempers, sours wine, and dogs grow mad. The Romans, dreading the indignation of this star, sacrificed a dog every year to it—viz., at its first appearance in our hemisphere—to appease its rage against mortals.

In winter, this Italian spider lurks in caverns and solitary places; and, if it happens to bite, hurts not; there it lives in a drowsy posture, and keeps Lent till summer, when the whole tribe creep out and disperse themselves over that pleasant land; and woe to the body asleep, and bare legs, in corn fields.

Those on the plains are much to be feared, the air being hotter there than on the mountains, where their bite is not dangerous, the solar rays not being so strong in those heights; and what is yet more surprising is that, if they wound any out of Apulia, though in places not remote from it, the wounded receive no deadly hurt.

When it bites, the pain resembles that given by the sting of a bee, and is attended with various symptoms, according to their different natures. The Northern Tarantula is the most terrible; those that are inclined to the white colour are not so dangerous; the spotted differs from both.

The wound given by any of them is dangerous, and has different indications. In some that are bitten, a universal stupor follows; others weep; some tremble and vomit; others laugh, fancying themselves to be kings. This, perhaps, made Dr. Cornelio represent this as an imaginary disease.

Some grow pale, sick, and faint, and die in a short time, unless relieved by music, which alone, without the help of medicine, performs the cure.

The wounded are as men half dead; but

at the first sound of a musical instrument, though they are very weak, and seemingly unable to stir, they begin by degrees to move their hands and feet, till at last they get up, and then fall to dancing with wonderful vigour for two or three hours, their strength and activity still increasing. Some will continue the dance without intermission for six hours, and when tired they are put to bed; and after they are sufficiently recruited by rest, they are called up again by the same tune, and renew the dance with great violence, the music still playing; and when the patients grow weary, they are put into bed again, and kept warm, to encourage perspiration. These exercises being continued six or seven days, the patient finds himself fatigued and unable to dance any longer, which is the characteristic of a cure.

They usually spend ten or twelve hours a day in this violent exercise, and continue it for three or four, or six days, by which time they are generally freed from all their symptoms—though not always, says the learned Baglivi; who observes that, about the same time next year, the distemper returns and will prove fatal, if not prevented by the same musical application.

To this account of the Tarantula, I have, by way of illustration, added the remarks of another learned foreigner, who says—

“The venomous bite of the Tarantula is quickly followed with a very acute pain, and soon after with numbness, profound sadness, difficult respiration; the pulse grows weak, the sight disturbed; persons lose their knowledge, sense, and motion; and if destitute of help, they die. The most effectual and certain remedy is music. When the person becomes destitute of knowledge and motion, a musician tries a variety of airs. Should he hit on that whose harmony is suited to the patient, he begins to move by degrees, and keeps time with his fingers, arms, legs, &c. He raises himself, and dances about six hours, without intermission.”

N.B.—Every sick person must have his particular and specific tune, and always one that is sprightly and moving.

The poison of the Tarantula, adds he, thickens the blood, and stops several of its passages—thence the numbness; the blood being thick, furnishes but a small quantity of animal spirits, their canals are shrunk in the brain; the nerves, being destitute of spirits, relax—thence proceed the inactivity, and defect of knowledge and motion. But the

vibration of the quick airs which are played agitates the blood. Being agitated and multiplied, they run into the fibres and nerves, which, being put into unison with the sonorous strings, receive their vibrations, and are shortened or extended successively; whence proceeds the successive motion of the fingers, arms, legs, &c.

The action of dancing augments the agitation of the blood, and makes the patient sweat. The poison being agitated or attenuated, by transpiration, in proportion as the poison is exhaled, the sick person perceives himself eased; this ease continually inclines him to dance. When all the poison is dissipated by agitation and sweat, the blood recovers its fluidity and usual course.

TABLE TALK.

THERE is an admirable institution at Sheffield called the Cherrytree Orphanage, but a friend—it is almost needless to name the place of his birth—says that it may be very good, and doubtless it is beneficial; but, for his part, he does not approve of it at all. The name, he says, is atrocious; and if he should die in a penurious state, he will never send his orphan children there. Only think, he says, sending the poor bairns to Cherrytree Orphanage, where cherries, though pleasant to the taste, suggest nothing but stony-heartedness!

A LONDON CLERGYMAN and his lady have set apart one day in each week for an "at home" to all their parishioners, rich and poor alike. A very good example, no doubt; but will it wash? That is, will the poor wash before they come to mix with their more favoured brothers and sisters? Oil and water will not mix; but there would be more probability of these visitors blending if oil and water were first brought into service by our humble friends.

THE CRITICS are very fond of falling foul of a novelist for what they term the improbabilities of his fiction. Here is a piece of fact—but, at the same time, so wild an adventure, that he would have been a daring novelist who would have incorporated it in his work:—"During the passage of H.M.S. *Seagull* from Ascension, and in the midst of a heavy squall, orders were given to shorten sail, when Lock, a fine young fellow,

and very popular with the crew, was thrown by a lurch of the ship from the topgallant-yard into the sea, a distance of eighty feet. The alarm was given, the engines stopped, the lifebuoy let go, and the boat lowered, but it was thought to be a forlorn hope; and after twenty minutes had elapsed a gun was fired to recall the boat, which returned, and was duly hoisted up. Lock was known to be a strong swimmer; but more out of respect for the poor fellow, whom all regarded as gone for ever, than with any hope of saving him, the ship lay to fully an hour after the accident. As the crew were gloomily peering over the bulwarks into the black waters, a faint cry was distinctly heard right ahead, and then arose such a cheer as only British tars can give. The boat was again lowered with wild haste, and from its crew presently came up, loud above the whistling wind, a shout of joy. In five minutes more, Lock stood upon the deck."

WE UNDERSTAND from a Yarmouth contemporary, dated November 15th, that the herring fishery then being prosecuted was unusually successful, many of the Scotch boats alone having earned as much as £325 each; yet, in spite of there being no signs of falling-off in the catches—on the contrary, every prospect of at least another month's good fishing, and therefore the possibility of their earning double that amount—from some old-fashioned whim, they were leaving for home, and, in fact, many had already gone. Now that meat, owing to the prohibitory price, does not often grace the tables of our poorer brethren, it seems a crying sin that, with such a vast supply of good wholesome food on our coast—and merely, we presume, because it was the custom of their fathers to leave at a certain time—they should be allowed to follow such a pig-headed example.

AFTER ONE of our noted counsellors had expended a considerable amount of eloquence, and successfully, in praying that a rule might be granted for a new trial, he shortly afterwards announced, amidst roars of laughter, that "*he was engaged on the other side.*" Did the other side join in the mirth?

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, *free by post*:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

JAN 4 1935

